Unsent Letter

Purpose:
This activity helps the students recognize the unresolved emotional issues in the novel. Much of Charlie's development is not mental but rather emotional and there is a huge conflict in the novel between his intellect and his emotions. This activity forces them to focus on those emotional issues and how they function in the novel.

Context:
This activity should be used after Charlie's September 27 entry when he goes to visit his mother and sister. At this point he has had encounters with everyone who is emotionally important in his life.

Directions:
Lead a class discussion about the different characters' relationships to Charlie. Ask them what his relationship with his parents is like. Faye? Alice? his sister? Nemur and Strauss? Does he communicate his emotions to these people? What attempts does he make to emotionally communicate with them? How successful is he?

After the class has recognized that he has unresolved emotional issues with characters in the novel share the unsent letter instructions with them and assign them to write the letter as homework.

Segue:
The next day, ask some of the students to share what they wrote about. Ask them what they learned about Charlie's character from this activity. How is his emotional growth comparable to his intellectual growth? Which is more important to him as a character?

Assessment:
Assess their letters based on completion and reference to actual events and issues in the novel.
Flowers for Algernon

Unsent Letter

Instructions:
Following our class discussion, think of a character who is emotionally important to Charlie. In the right column, list emotional conflicts, issues, or challenges Charlie faces in relation to this character. In the left column, address to what degree these issues are resolved in the novel.

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<th>Conflicts</th>
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Now, write a letter either to Charlie from this character, or from Charlie to this character. Address the unresolved emotional conflicts you have identified in this relationship.

For full credit your letter should:
• directly reference events in the novel
• address the unresolved conflict
• illustrate insight about how the characters feel