STUDY GUIDE

“Charles” by Shirley Jackson and
“No News” by Connie Regan-Blake and Barbara Freeman

I. VOCABULARY: Think about the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence. Then answer the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>raucous</th>
<th>insolently</th>
<th>simultaneously</th>
<th>reformation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cynically</td>
<td>primly</td>
<td>lapse</td>
<td>solemnly</td>
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</table>

1. On page 544, what words suggest Laurie was being _insolent_ to his father?

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2. When Laurie came home for lunch his voice suddenly became _raucous_ shouting. How did his voice sound? How do you know?

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3. The mother and the father asked questions _simultaneously_. What does that mean? What are some other things that can be done simultaneously?

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4. After Laurie was describing some of Charles’s behavior, he got _solemnly_ back in his chair? Why was he acting this way? What does solemn mean?

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5. What behaviors and actions suggested there was a _reformation_ in Charles?

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6. At the PTA meeting, the teacher spoke very **primly**. Why was she acting this way? Do you think this was a sensitive subject for her to discuss?

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7. The teacher explained that now Laurie is a fine little helper, with an occasional **lapse** of course. Is Laurie always well-behaved now? How do you know?

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8. The author describes the father as being **cynical** of the positive changes in Charles. Does he believe Charles has changed? How do you know?

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9. If there was a Charles, do you agree that his mother would look **haggard**? Explain.

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**STUDY TIPS:** Think of **synonyms** and **antonyms** for each vocabulary
Think of a **time** you act or **behave** for each vocabulary word
II. **SHORT ANSWER:** Write your responses to the questions in this section.

1. What is the type of conflict in “Charles?” How do you know?

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2. This question has two parts. Answer Part One then answer Part Two.

   **Part One:** View the photograph on page 545. What words would you use to describe this boy’s personality?

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   **Part Two:** Would you use similar words to describe anyone in the story?

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3. Reread paragraph 1 on page 544. Why do you think Laurie turns into a “swaggering character” when he begins kindergarten? Explain.

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4. According to Laurie, who is spanked for being fresh with the teacher?

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5. Why does Laurie’s teacher give him an apple?

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6. For this question, reread the paragraphs on page 545. Then answer Part One and Part Two.

Part One: Why does Laurie “grin enormously” when he describes what Charles has done?

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Part Two: What did you think was driving Laurie to enjoy this kind of unruly behavior?

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7. On page 547, why does Laurie take so much joy in whispering the “bad word” to his father?

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8. Compare Laurie’s behavior at home with Charles’s actions at school?

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9. This question has **Three Parts**. Answer each part.

   **Part One:** In your own words, explain what it means to be an “institute”?

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   **Part Two:** How does Charles become an institution in this family?

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   **Part Three:** What’s an institution in your family?

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10. Reread page 547 (column 2, paragraphs 1-4). What does Laurie’s father mean by the word **plotting**?

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11. What is the climax of the story? Why is it the climax?

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12. This question has two parts. Answer Part One then answer Part Two.

Part One: What signs or clues did Laurie’s mother in “Charles” miss or ignore?
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Part Two: How could the ending have been different if she had been more observant?
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13. How do you think the parents felt after they learned the truth?
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14. In “No News” what is unusual about the plot structure?
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15. How is Georgeanne’s statement at the end of the story ironic? (But other than that, there ain’t been no news.)
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16. What does the Southern lady find out after her friend assures her that “there’s no news?”
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17. What is the significance of the story being told in the mother’s point of view?
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18. When writers give clues or hints about something that will occur later, they are **foreshadowing**. In both “Charles” and “No News” you might read between the lines to predict the plot twist at the end. Explain the clues from each story that might have given away the surprise ending.
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19. Think about how Laurie in “Charles” and Georgeanne in “No News” understate or misstate the truth, setting the state for a plot twist at the end. In the boxes below, answer the questions about each character’s version of the truth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the character thinks or is told at first</th>
<th>“Charles”</th>
<th>“No News”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What the character learns at the story’s end</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How the characters learns the “bad news”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Why the story is humorous</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
20. How are “Charles” and “No News” similar?

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21. This question has Three Parts. Answer each part completely.

Part One: List the details from the story that suggest it takes place a long time ago. (There are about 8.)

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Part Two: How does the setting impact the events in the story?

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Part Three: How would the story be different if it took place in 2014?

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