Practice Questions: “Ransom of Red Chief”

1. What is the AUTHOR’S PURPOSE for writing this story? ________________________
   Support your answer with a quote, example, or detail from the story.

2. “Bill and me had a joint capital of about six hundred dollars, and we needed just two
   thousand dollars more to pull off a fraudulent town-lot scheme in Western Illinois with.”
   How does this sentence contribute to the plot?

3. “The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten on the opposite fence.”
   How does this description fit into the overall structure of the passage? (contrast,
   background, foreshadowing, explanation, emphasis)

4. Describe how Bill and Sam change in the story. Support your answer with a detail, an
   example, or a quote.
5. Identify the theme of this story. Describe how the author develops the theme. Support your answer with a detail, an example, or a quote.

6. What is the relationship between this quote “Bill ad me figured that Ebenezer would melt down for a ransom of two thousand dollars to a cent. But wait till I tell you.” and this quote later in the story “You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands.”

7. Place the sentences in order to create a summary of the story.

- Mr. Dorset asks for money to take Johnny back.
- Bill and Sam write a ransom note.
- Bill and Sam need money for a fraudulent land deal.
- Bill and Sam are glad to pay Mr. Dorset $250.
- Bill and Sam discover Red Chief is a brat.
8. Place each character’s letter on the line next to his quote.

   A. Bill        B. Ebenezer Dorset        C. Sam        D. Johnny Dorset

   _____ 1. Ha! Cursed paleface, do you dare enter the camp of Red Chief?

   _____ 2. I went out and caught that boy and shook him until his freckles rattled.

   _____ 3. You won’t leave me long with him, will you Sam?

   _____ 4. You bring Johnny home and pay me two hundred and fifty dollars in cash, and I agree to take him off your hands.

9. Describe the setting in this story. How does the setting affect the plot?

   I got the knife away from the kid and made him lie down again. But, from that moment, Bill’s spirit was broken. He laid down on his side of the bed, but he never closed an eye again in sleep as long as the boy was with us.”

10. How does this paragraph contribute to the development of ideas in this story?
13. From what point of view is this story told? Does this perspective make the story more affective? Support your answer with your own thoughts and with specific details, facts, quotes, and/or examples.

12. How does the author develop the character’s point of view? (descriptions, relationships, character development, background information) How does this contribute to the story? Support your answer with a quote, an example, or a detail.

What is the effect of the irony in this story?