"Desiree's Baby"
Comprehension Questions

1. Identify the point of view from which the narrative is told.

2. As Désirée becomes a young woman, Armand's feelings for change. He fell for her "as if struck by a pistol shot"; his feelings "swept along like an avalanche, or like a prairie fire." What do these figurative expressions have in common?

3. Refer once again to the figurative expressions in the previous question. What is the author implying about the relationship between Désirée and Armand?

4. How does Chopin establish a setting that is influenced by French culture?

5. Désirée's father has a frank conversation with Armand about Désirée's heritage. Explain the irony of Armand's response.

6. According to Désirée, why specifically is Armand proud of his son immediately following his birth?

7. According to Désirée, how had the birth of her child influenced Armand's behavior?

8. Several months after the birth of her child, Désirée senses that things are not right at home. What specific details contribute to her sense of concern?

9. Identify the incident that causes Désirée to have an epiphany regarding her son.

10. Refer to Désirée's letter to Madame Valmonde on page four (pasted below). Given Désirée's characterization throughout the story, make a logical inference. What is the cause of the agony Désirée expresses?
> "My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God's sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die. I cannot be so unhappy, and live."

11. What motivated Armond's parents to withhold the truth from him?

12. Given the story's conclusion, make a logical inference. What is implied about the values of Armand's father? Explain.

13. Given the fate of Désirée, make a reasoned claim. Why does she commit suicide when it is objectively clear that her adoptive family loves her (and her child) unconditionally?

14. How is the revelation about Armand foreshadowed earlier in the narrative? Cite specific textual details.