Assignment on Searle's Chinese Room Argument

Read Searle's Chinese Room paper. See link on LMS.

Also see the MindProject website on the Chinese Room argument, complete with animations:

http://www.mind.ilstu.edu/curriculum/modOverview.php?modGUI=203

1. What is the conclusion of Searle's argument? Try to be exact, but use your own words.

2. Would Searle agree with Turing's claim that anything that passes the Turing Test is intelligent?

3. The animations show the person inside the room transforming input strings into output strings in a single step. Indeed, it looks as if the rule book works like a simple look-up table: a long list of input-output pairs. Thus, the animation suggests that the person inside the room simply takes the input, matches this input string with the left side of the pair, and outputs the right side of the pair. However, the Systems Reply mentions that the man inside the room has "a lot of scratch paper and pencils for doing calculations". But why would the person be needing to do any calculations if he uses a simple input-output look-up table? Put differently, why is it suggested that a simple look-up table set-up is actually *not* sufficient to convince the Chinese speaking people outside the room that there is someone inside the room who understand Chinese? (hint: consider a scenario where the people outside the room are asking questions like "How much is 2 times 2?" What, and how many, other mathematical questions like this might they be asking?). So, in this context, what is one important reason for the person inside the room to have scratch paper?

4. There is a second important reason for the person needing paper inside the room in order for the Chinese speaking people outside the room to be convinced that there is someone inside the room who understand Chinese. What is an additional function that the paper serves? (hint: no longer think of the paper as "scratch" paper!)

5. Where does Searle stand on the mind-body problem? Is Searle a dualist? A materialist? A functionalist? A computationalist?

6. How large do you estimate the book has to be that would make the Chinese Room scenario work? (note: the animations show several rule books, instead of a single rule book, but also remember that they assumed the Look-Up Table approach) How much paper do you think is needed? And how fast do you estimate the person inside the room would have to work in order to keep up the pace of a normal conversation in Chinese?