Edward Teach "Blackbeard" Reading Comprehension

Introduction
Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard, was an English pirate during the Golden Age of Piracy. After serving as a privateer in the British navy, he, like many other privateers, turned to a life of piracy when the War of Spanish Succession ended in 1713.

Plunder!
In a few short years, Blackbeard gained a notorious reputation as he and his crew attacked settlements in the Caribbean Sea and along the Atlantic Coast of North America. Blackbeard would plunder merchant ships, board them, and steal all of the gold, jewels, coins, food, liquor, and weapons. It was said that Blackbeard's appearance alone was enough to cause the enemy to surrender. According to legend, Blackbeard would often tie burning fuses to the end of his beard when the enemy was in his presence. Despite his reputation, there are no accounts of Blackbeard killing or torturing anyone.

Blockade of Charleston Harbor
Blackbeard is perhaps most famous for his legendary blockade of Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. In 1718, Blackbeard entered Charleston Harbor in his ship known as *Queen Anne's Revenge* with three smaller ships. He proceeded to plunder five merchant ships entering or leaving the harbor. Shipping traffic in the harbor came to a standstill in fear of the pirates. In one of the vessels, Blackbeard took a group of prominent Charleston citizens as hostages, who were later ransomed (without their clothes) for a chest full of medicine. Then, Blackbeard escaped north, where he ran three of the ships aground and marooned most of his crew. Many believe Blackbeard marooned his crew so he could keep a greater portion of the treasure acquired from Charleston. Nevertheless, Blackbeard escaped to North Carolina and accepted a pardon under the royal Act of Grace.

The Dreadful End
Blackbeard finally met his end in November of 1718 after the governor of Virginia, Alexander Spotswood, had placed a bounty on his head. He was killed in a naval battle off the coast of North Carolina by Robert Maynard. Maynard cut off Blackbeard's head and hung it on his ship.

In Popular Culture
Today, Blackbeard is perhaps the most well-known of all the pirates. He is referenced in many works of literature including Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, as well as in numerous video games, theme park rides, cartoons, comics, and movies.

1. **What happened in 1713?**
   A. The War of Spanish Succession started
   B. Blackbeard blockaded Charleston Harbor
   C. Blackbeard was born
   D. Many privateers turned to a life of piracy

2. **According to the passage, how long did it take Blackbeard to gain a notorious reputation?**
   A. He gained his reputation quickly
   B. He gained his reputation over many long years
   C. He gained his reputation when he died
   D. The passage doesn't tell

3. **Which of the following might be considered surprising in consideration of Blackbeard's reputation?**
   A. He is referenced in famous novels, video games, cartoons, and more.
   B. He never killed or tortured anyone
   C. He would try to scare enemies by lighting his beard on fire
   D. He stole countless amounts of food, weapons, liquor, and coins

4. **To which of the following questions would "to keep more of the treasure" be the answer?**
   A. Why did Blackbeard blockade Charleston Harbor?
   B. Why did Blackbeard plunder ships and steal gold and weapons?
   C. Why did Blackbeard accept a pardon?
   D. Why did Blackbeard supposedly maroon most of his crew?

5. **What happened first?**
   A. Blackbeard blockaded Charleston Harbor
   B. Blackbeard accepted a royal pardon
   C. Blackbeard gained a fearsome reputation
   D. The War of Spanish Succession ended

6. **Which question is NOT answered in the passage?**
   A. Who placed a bounty on Blackbeard's head?
   B. Who wrote Treasure Island?
   C. Who killed Blackbeard?
   D. When did Blackbeard surrender?

7. **What does "marooned" mean in the following sentence?**
   A. killed
   B. kidnapped
   C. stranded
   D. enslaved