Amazing Armadillos

Have you ever seen an armadillo? An armadillo resembles a stone carving because its skin is hard, like armor. Almost the entire body of the armadillo is covered with this tough, armor-like skin.

Early Spanish explorers gave the armadillo its name. They thought the armadillo’s skin looked like their own armor. In Spanish, *armadillo* means “little armored one.”

Scientists believe that armadillos were on Earth many years before Spanish explorers discovered them. They may have lived 55 million years ago! They may even be related to the glyptodont, an animal that lived at the same time as dinosaurs. Today, the armadillo is the official small mammal of the state of Texas.

The armadillo’s shell, called a carapace, is not solid like the shell of a turtle or a snail. In the middle are nine bands that are joined with skin. This structure allows the armadillo to contort, or bend, its body and move easily.

Did you know that armadillos can swim? They often avoid or escape predators by swimming away. First, the armadillo takes big breaths to fill its stomach with air. This makes the armadillo float. Then the armadillo paddles across the water.

An armadillo can walk under the water, too. It holds one big breath and begins to sink. When it reaches the bottom, it starts walking. An armadillo can hold its breath for as long as eight minutes!
Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

1. Read this sentence from the passage.
   
   An armadillo resembles a stone carving because its skin is hard, like armor.
   
   If \textit{resembles} means “looks like,” what does \textit{resemblance} mean?
   
   \begin{itemize}
   \item[A] a look
   \item[B] a likeness
   \item[C] to look like
   \item[D] to have looked like
   \end{itemize}

2. What did Spanish explorers think an armadillo’s skin looked like?
   
   \begin{itemize}
   \item[A] armor
   \item[B] bands
   \item[C] paddles
   \item[D] water
   \end{itemize}

3. According to the passage, what is one way an armadillo escapes a predator?
   
   \begin{itemize}
   \item[A] by flying away
   \item[B] by climbing a tree
   \item[C] by swimming away
   \item[D] by digging into the ground
   \end{itemize}

4. Which statement would the author MOST LIKELY agree with?
   
   \begin{itemize}
   \item[A] Armadillos are boring animals.
   \item[B] Armadillos are interesting animals.
   \item[C] Armadillos will become extinct soon.
   \item[D] Armadillos have only been around for 10 million years.
   \end{itemize}

5. Describe an armadillo’s skin and shell. Support your answer with at least two details from the passage. Write your response on another sheet of paper.