

Strawberry Girl



Use these questions to discuss with children 8 to 12 years old the following economic concepts in *Strawberry Girl* by Lois Lenski (ISBN: 978-0-06-440585-0): **benefits, capital resources, choices, decisionmaking, human capital, human resources, income, labor, natural resources, and property rights.**

Page 3

- 1. Labor is the quantity and quality of human effort directed toward producing goods and services. Labor is also known as human resources. In the story, Mrs. Slater described the new Boyer family this way: "Regular strawberry family, jedgin' from the size of it—six or seven young'uns, I reckon." What does this imply about the labor and human resources necessary for growing strawberries?**

Growing strawberries was labor intensive and required many human resources.

Pages 8-9

- 2. Income is the payment people earn for the work they do. How did the Slaters and the Boyers earn income?**

The Slaters earned income by selling cows for beef. The Boyers planned to sell crops such as oranges, strawberries, sweet 'taters and other crops.

Page 9

- 3. Benefits are things favorable to the decision-maker. The Boyers and Slaters both had cows. The Boyer cows provided beef, fertilizer, milk, and butter for the family. Why did the cows owned by the Slaters not provide the same benefits?**

The Slater cows only had grass to eat on the open range. The Boyer cows were fed, cared for, and kept in cowpens.

Pages 23-26

- 4. Property rights are laws that allow people to control, benefit from, exchange, and protect**

- property. Why did the Boyers decide they needed to protect their property and what action did they take?**

They built fences to keep the Slater animals out of their crops. The Slater horse damaged strawberries by rolling around and trampling rows. The Slater cows pulled leaves and bark off the orange trees.

Pages 25-26

- 5. Natural resources are things that occur naturally in and on the earth that are used to produce goods and services. What natural resource did Mr. Boyer use to build fences to protect his crops?**

He used wood from trees to build fences. Trees are natural resources.

Pages 29-38

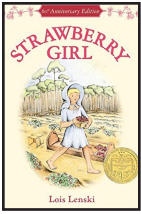
- 6. Human capital is the knowledge and skills that people obtain through education, experience, and training. Describe how education was valued by the two families.**

The Boyer children went to school but the Slater children usually did not. On the first day, the two Slater boys that went to school that day arrived late and with bad attitudes. They had been hunting and were disrespectful to the teacher. The boys stated that their father told them they didn't need any "book-larning." After the Slater boys beat up the teacher, the school was closed.

Page 44

- 7. Why didn't the fence keep the Slater hogs out of the Boyer crops?**

The hogs were able to root under the fence.



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Pages 53, 59, 63

8. What did Mr. Boyer use to replace the rail fences?

Barbed wire

Pages 67-68

9. Working in the strawberry field, Mr. Boyer told the children to “goose-pick ‘em”. What did this mean? What natural resource made this work more difficult? Why?

The children had to pick out the grass and weeds around the strawberry plants by hand—like a goose would do. Water is a natural resource. The plants were watered, and this made more weeds and grass grow. More grass and weeds made the work more difficult.

Pages 88, 96-97

10. Decisionmaking is choosing among alternatives. For generations, the Slaters had chosen to be squatters and take advantage of the open range. The Boyers bought their property. What were the consequences of these choices? How did they cause conflict?

The Boyers had to spend money for fencing to protect their property from the Slater livestock. The Slaters lost the use of the land that the Boyers bought. Conflict occurred when the Slater cattle no longer had easy access to water because of the fences. When the hot summer dried up water in Slater ponds, Mr. Slater planned to drive the cows to another source of water. But the Boyer barbed wire fences prevented access to the lake. Mr. Slater cut the barbed wire to let his cows through, and they trampled strawberries.

Page 93

11. Who were “Crackers” and why were they called that?

Folks born in Florida or who lived there a long time were called Crackers. The name Crackers came from the sound of the long rawhide whips that cowmen used when they drove a herd of cattle.

Page 94

12. Who was “Strawberry Girl” and how did she get her name?

Strawberry Girl was Birdie Boyer. She earned this name by selling strawberries.

Page 107

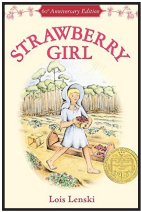
13. Why were the schools called Strawberry Schools?

Picking strawberries required much labor. Strawberry season came in the winter months, and school let out for vacation so kids could pick berries. Throughout the strawberry area, schools became known as Strawberry Schools.

Pages 119-123

14. Capital resources are goods that have been produced and are used to produce other goods and services. They are used over and over again in the production process. What capital resource did Mr. Boyer use when shipping berries?

Strawberries were shipped by train in wooden crates until Mr. Boyer bought a pony refrigerator to replace the wooden crates. The train, the wooden crates, and the refrigerator are all examples of capital resources.



Strawberry Girl Continued



15. What were some advantages of using the pony refrigerators and how did they affect income?

Using the pony refrigerators increased the quantity shipped, decreased the time for shipment, and preserved the strawberries on ice. They were better able to keep strawberries cool, so they could ship more strawberries. Refrigeration increased revenue, allowing income to increase.

Page 125

16. How did Mr. Boyer describe the results of open range?

“Cows go everywhere, and the owner never knows how many he loses. Better keep ‘em fenced up and give ‘em a little care.”

Pages 134-138

17. How were ownership and property rights of the Slater and Boyer cows protected?

Each family's cows were identified by a unique brand. The Slater cattle were branded with a circle S brand. The Boyer brand was a double B. The consequence of changing brands was jail.

Pages 186-187

18. How did the phosphate company change things for the Slaters?

The company leased land and fenced it in. They leased most of the land the Slater cows had used for pasture. This forced Mr. Slater to sell out since he couldn't use the open range for his cows.

Pages 187-188

19. How did the change to more and more fencing and less open range change the way Mr. Slater and his family earned income?

Mr. Slater took a job at the phosphate company as a dynamiter. Mrs. Slater and her boys planned to sell crops like the Boyers.

Pages 188-191

20. How did the value of education change for the Slater family at the end of the story?

Shoestring said his father had made a mistake by taking his boys out of school. Mr. Slater wanted Shoestring to get a little “book larnin’” so he might get smart enough to be a senator or commissioner. When the new schoolhouse opened, Jefferson Davis Slater was in attendance and eager to learn.