

Questions

1. What were tobacco bags?
2. What were tobacco bag stringers?
3. Why did the bags need to have strings in them?
4. How many bags did a person need to string to earn \$2.00?
\$5.50? \$10.00?
5. Why did the Great Depression make the tobacco bag stringing money so necessary?
6. Why is it important that the stringers could work at home?
7. Would you have wanted to work as a tobacco bag stringer?
Why or why not?

Answers

1. Bags to hold loose tobacco.
2. People hired to put the drawstrings into the tobacco bags.
3. To pull them shut so that the loose tobacco would not fall out.
4. Amounts are approximate and should be adjusted to the level of the student. \$2.00 – 4000 bags; \$5.50 – 11,000 bags; \$10.00 – 20,000 bags.
5. Since many people were out of work, the money that was earned at home by the stringers could make up a much-needed income for the families.
6. Women with small children, disabled persons, and the elderly could all work on the bags. Also, whole families could do the work.
7. Answers will vary. It is important to lead a discussion with the students emphasizing that although the monetary reward seems very small to us, it was important to those families. They should also consider the tedium of the work, the hardship of repetitious movement, and the difficulty on the eyes.

This could be a wonderful debate with the students taking opposite sides of this question.