

**The Questionnaire**  
**Laurie and Winifred Bauer**

This document contains the instructions sent to schools with the questionnaire, and the questionnaire itself.

In addition, the participating schools were sent a document outlining some suggestions and background material for further activities which might follow on from the questionnaire. We received very little feedback on this, although one or two teachers said they intended to use the material to develop ideas which had arisen as a result of the questionnaire.

### Instructions to Teachers

Please read these instructions carefully. Following them will ensure that the results are collected in the same way in all schools, making the data comparable.

The teacher is asked to read out the questions (announcing the numbers) to the class as a group, and to record the responses on the questionnaire.

The children will need paper and pencil in case there are responses they prefer to write down, rather than say. If there are complex responses such as a rhyme, it will be more efficient for you to ask one member of the class to write it down, rather than letting the students dictate it to you.

- 1 Pilot-test experience strongly suggests that the questionnaire is too long to complete in one session. 15–20 minute sessions are suggested. It is important that the students do not become bored. The questions are grouped into seven thematic sections. These vary in length, and it is not necessary to complete even an entire section in one sitting if it is too long for your students or your timetable. If you wish to complete the questionnaire quickly, then the suggestion of the pilot-study teachers is that you complete it in two sessions on either side of the lunch break.
- 2 Please present the questions using the exact words on the questionnaire. If necessary, you may offer brief explanations, but I hope that the questions are clear. Please do **not** offer examples of words by way of explanation.
- 3 Please do not suggest words to the students, and please do not include any answers which are not provided by the students, even if you know they have forgotten something.
- 4 If the question of swear-words arises, I suggest that you say, “If that is what you **normally** say, then it should be included.” You could then add something like, “but I would like you to write it on your paper rather than say it aloud” if you would prefer not to hear such language in the classroom.
- 5 Section 7 (which is optional) contains a number of open-ended questions. I hope that these will provide a motivated opportunity for your students to produce the expository writing that is needed to answer them. If you find the time to provide answers to these, please do not edit the content of any work produced by the students.
- 6 If you wish to make a copy of the responses before returning the completed questionnaire, please feel free to do so.

### Guidance on Recording the Responses

The task of recording the responses will not always be straightforward. **That is why we are asking the teachers to do it.**

- 1 Some of the responses will clearly be irrelevant – some of the students will inevitably lose track of the scenario. Use your judgement, and omit these.

- 2 Some of the responses provided will be unnecessarily long-winded, and you will need to use your discretion about what to record. Suppose the Q says “Trindy loves science. How would she tell you this?” If a student says “Science is cool, because you can find out about things”, all you need to record is “Science is cool”. (Abbreviating to “Sc. is cool” is fine.)
- 3 If a response uses the same vocabulary as the question, it is not what I am looking for. I have often provided a check-box for this option, so that the students will not think that you are ignoring some of their responses. Where other responses which are not of interest were common in the pilot test, I have provided check-boxes to save you time. Suppose the Q says “Trindy doesn’t like science. How would she tell you this?” Here are some sample student responses and teacher recordings:

Student’s response	Teacher’s recording
I don’t like science.	Ticks box “I don’t like science”
I hate science.	Writes <i>I hate science</i> .
Science stinks.	Writes <i>Science stinks</i> .
Science sucks.	Adds to previous <i>Science stinks/sucks</i> .

Note that I am probably not interested in “I hate science”, but if the students can’t think of any other responses, it may be important. If in doubt, put it in. It will help you to remember that I am looking first and foremost for vocabulary which might differ from one region to another.

**Please do not read out the check-box answers** – they are not part of the question. I have put things which are only for the teacher in a **different font** as a reminder.

- 4 It may occasionally be necessary to indicate some of the features of responses that accompany the words. For example:
- If a student responds “Science is so cool”, with strong stress on *so*, then recording the stress is important. Use a double underline for this.
  - It may be important to note the tone of voice, eg add [sarcastic]. Use square brackets for such “stage directions”.
  - A gesture may be an important part of a response. It may be too difficult to describe, but [+ gesture] will give me a hint.
  - Noises will be difficult to record, and an indication of the type will usually be adequate, e.g. [groan].
- 5 Where the spelling of answers is an issue, please use your best guess, as in process writing. “Stoopid-oopid” will give me a good idea of what the student said; “stupid-upid” suggests a different pronunciation.
- 6 If there is no answer for a particular question, please put a cross on the appropriate line or in the appropriate box. This will let me distinguish between questions where the students cannot provide an answer and questions which you are unable to attempt for whatever reason. “Nothing

special” may seem a more helpful negative response to certain questions. Please feel free to use this if appropriate.

- 7 If several alternative responses are given, please put them on separate lines or put semicolons between them, e.g. *cool; neat; great; super*. If answers contain optional words, enclose them in brackets, e.g. *(A) pinch and a punch for the first of the month (and no returns)*. If alternatives are given in one slot in a sentence, use slashes, e.g. *Science stinks/sucks*.
- 8 When you decide that an item is worth recording, please take care to record exactly what the students say. It is important, for example, to record whether they say “I bags” or “Bags I” or just “Bags”.

**Thank you very much for your time and interest. Without your cooperation this research would not be possible.**

***Note to the teacher: Please read these instructions to the students before they start answering the questionnaire.***

### **Instructions to Students**

You are taking part in a survey of some of the words children use when they talk to each other. The researcher wants to find out if children use the same words all over the country, or if there are differences from one part of New Zealand to the next.

The researcher is asking **you** about this, because **you** are the experts. No-one else knows the answers as well as you do. Please try to remember what younger children do and say as well as what you do and say yourselves.

The questions are about the sorts of things children say to each other in the playground or when working together in class. Please try to think of the things that people in this school **usually** say in these situations. For many questions, you will be able to think of several appropriate answers. Please include all the things that are **often** said in this school.

For some of the questions, you may not use any special words. If that happens, please say "There's nothing special." Please don't invent answers you've never heard before.

If the teacher doesn't notice that you have an answer to give, or if you have an answer which you don't want to say aloud for some reason, you can write it on a piece of paper. Write down the number of the question, and write your answer. Do not put your name on the paper. At the end, give your paper to your teacher. If you know that some words are used by just one particular group of students (for example, young children only) please say so.

Now, before you start, you need to know about the survey's three make-believe students, who are always known by their nicknames. Trindy is a girl, and Jostie is a boy. The third student is Brackie. You won't be sure whether Brackie is a girl or a boy. If you are a girl, think of Brackie as a girl. If you are a boy, think of Brackie as a boy. Please think of them as your new friends. On the next page there is a picture to help you remember who is who.

***Note to the teacher: Please pin up the page that follows where the students can see it as they answer the questions.***

# Your New Friends

Trindy

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Jostie

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Brackie

Å<sub>or</sub> Ç

## Questionnaire on NZ Children's Playground Language

### Section 1

The first questions are about a few of the games you play.

- 1 At your school, do children play a game with many players where one player has to run and try to touch another player while all the other players try to run away and not get touched?

☐ No. **Go to question 2.**

☐ Yes. **Please ask the children these questions:**

- (a) What is this game usually called at your school?

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- (b) At your school, how do you usually tell someone that they are to be the player who tries to touch the others?

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- (c) Is there a special word which the player who touches someone says as they touch them?

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- (d) Is there a word which you can say to show that you are not playing for a short time, for instance because you need to tie up your shoelace?

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- 2 Here is the description of another game:

This game needs a lot of players. All the players except one stand behind a line on a field with a parallel line some distance away. One person is in the middle. The person in the middle calls a player by name. That player (the runner) tries to run to the other line without being touched by the player in the middle. At any time the runner can call out a special word, and then all the other players also have to try to run across without being touched. Any person touched stays in the middle and helps the first person. The player in the middle can also make everyone run by calling out a special word.

Do children play that game at your school? (If you do not play it exactly like that, don't worry.)

☐ No. **Go to question 3.**

☐ Yes. **Please ask the children these questions:**

- (a) What do you call this game?

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- (b) What is the word you use to make everyone run?

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- 3 Here's the description of another game:

One player stands facing a wall. The other players stand behind a line some distance away. They try to creep up and touch the wall. The player facing the wall can turn round at any time. Any player seen moving must return to the base line. The first player to reach the wall takes the place of the player against the wall, and the game begins again.

Do children at your school play a game like this? (If you do not play it **exactly** like this, do not worry.)

- ☐ No. **Go to question 4.**
- ☐ Yes. **Please ask the children this question:**

- (a) What do you call this game?

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- 4 In games like those we've been talking about, how do you choose the player who starts the game on the opposite side to everyone else? If you use rhymes or chants to choose them, please tell me them.

**Note to the teacher: If there are several answers for this question, it may be best if you choose one student to write each rhyme or describe each process they use. I need the whole rhyme, and an outline of any process, not just the names, please.**

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**Section 2**

These questions are about some of the set words or phrases you might use.

- 5** At your school, do you say or do something special on the first day of a month? If so, what?

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- 6** If you say exactly the same thing at exactly the same time as someone else, what do you say and do next?

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- 7** Do you say things like “First back into the classroom is a \_\_\_\_\_”, or “Last one to touch the shed is a \_\_\_\_\_”? If so, what words do you **usually** use to finish the sentences?

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- 8 If you don't come first at something, do you tell the winner that it is **not** best to be first, but better to be second, third, or in some other place? If so, how do children at your school say this?

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- 9 Your class is waiting for the bus to arrive to take you on a trip. You are not at the front of the queue, but you want to sit in the back seat. What would you say to make sure that you have the right to sit there?

- ☐ I want to sit in the back seat.
- ☐ Can I sit in the back seat?
- ☐ Ask someone to save you a seat.
- ☐ Offer a bribe/threat.

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- 10 Your class is waiting for the bus to arrive to take you on a trip. You are right at the back of the queue, but you definitely do **not** want to sit in the front seat. What would you say to make sure that your classmates will not make you sit there?

- ☐ I don't want to sit in the front seat.
- ☐ I'm not going to sit in the front seat.
- ☐ Ask someone to save you a (good) seat.
- ☐ Offer a bribe/threat.

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- 11 At your school, are there special things you do and say to stop someone giving you something you don't want? If so, what?

☐ I don't want it.

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- 12 At your school, are there special things you do and say to stop someone giving **back** something you've given them? If so, what?

☐ I don't want it (back).

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- 13 Jostie has given you some interesting shells. You want to check whether he is just lending them to you, or whether he is giving them to you permanently. How would you ask him?

☐ Are you just lending them to me?

☐ Do you want them back?

☐ Can I keep them?/Are they for me to keep?

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**Section 3**

The next few questions ask how you talk about some things that might happen out of school.

- 14** On Saturday, you went to town to see Walt Disney's *Tarzan*. How would you tell your friend what you did without naming *Tarzan*?

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- 15** Brackie goes to the shop and buys a mixed bag of things like jaffas, wine-gums, toffees, Minties, and liquorice all-sorts. How would you finish the sentence "Brackie's got a bag of \_\_\_\_\_"?

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- 16** Two people are riding on a one-seater bicycle at the same time. Do you have a special word or words for this illegal activity?

☐ No special word

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- 17** When you are riding your bike, you lose control, and crash into a bank. Your bike is damaged so badly that you can't ride it. How would you describe the state of your bike?

☐ My bike was (really/badly) damaged.

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**Section 4**

Next there are some questions about the way you talk to your classmates.

**18** Brackie is a good friend of yours.

- (a) What is the first thing you would say to Brackie when you get to school in the morning?

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- (b) What would you say to Brackie as you left school in the afternoon?

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**19** Trindy has a new watch. She keeps telling everyone how great it is. You get tired of it. How would you tell your friends what you think of her?

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**20** You know that Brackie has gone to town without permission instead of coming to school. How would you tell your friends what Brackie is doing?

☐ Brackie has gone to town without permission.

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- 21** Jostie doesn't like sport. One day he comes in after lunch limping badly, and tells the teacher that he can't possibly play sport because he has hurt his foot. By the end of school, he is walking normally. What would you say to tell him that he had only pretended to be hurt to get out of sport?

☐ You were only pretending to be hurt.

☐ You weren't really hurt.

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- 22** You ran onto the school garden to get back your ball, and accidentally trod on some plants. The caretaker saw you and told you how cross he was with you. Later, you want to tell Brackie what the caretaker did. What would you say?

☐ The caretaker was (very) cross with me.

☐ The caretaker told me off.

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- 23** You have found a strange insect. Your friends are standing some distance away, but you want them to come and look at it. What would you say to get their attention?

☐ Come and look at this. (without call for attention)

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**Section 5**

These questions are about expressing your feelings.

- 24** Your best friend tells you that they are having a party. This is very good news. How would you tell them you are really pleased?

☐ I am (really/very) pleased.

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- 25** You are talking to Trindy about the maths test. She thought it was really simple. How would she tell you this?

☐ It was (really/so simple).

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- 26** Jostie found the maths test really difficult. What would he say about it?

☐ It was (really) hard/difficult.

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- 27** You got full marks in your maths test. What would you say to show how pleased you were?

☐ I'm (really/very/so) pleased.

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- 28** Trindy pulls an old packed lunch out of the bottom of her bag. Everything in it is squashed and mouldy. She shows it to you. What would you say?

☐ Response consists solely of noises expressing disgust (e.g. eww!)

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- 29** Jostie doesn't think his painting is any good. What would he say about his painting?

☐ My painting isn't any good.

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- 30** Trindy thinks your story is really good. How would she tell you this?

☐ Your story is really good.

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- 31** In the finals of the speech competition, Trindy forgot her speech, and made a lot of mistakes. Her Mum asks how it went. What would Trindy say?

☐ I forgot it (and made a lot of mistakes).

☐ It didn't go very well.

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- 32** When you were talking to one of the teachers, you called her “Mum” by mistake. You went red in the face and felt very uncomfortable. You want to tell your friend **how you felt**. What would you say?

☐ I felt very uncomfortable.

☐ Nothing special

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- 33** You have just won your school speech competition. The Principal talks to you afterwards and tells you what a wonderful speech it was, and how proud (s)he is of you. You feel very uncomfortable about this. You want to tell your friend **how you felt**. What would you say?

☐ I felt very uncomfortable.

☐ Nothing special

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- 34** Jostie accidentally bumps into you and your drink gets spilt everywhere. He says, “Sorry”. You want him to know that you are not upset about it. What would you say?

☐ I’m not upset about it.

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- 35** You were climbing a tree, and the branch you were standing on suddenly cracked, giving you a real fright. You want to tell your friend how you felt. What would you say?

☐ I got a (real) fright.

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- 36** Your teacher taught your class a new game, which you all really enjoyed. Jostie was away, but when he got back, you told him about it. How would you tell him that you really enjoyed it?

☐ I really enjoyed it.

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**Section 6**

The next questions are about the words you might use for people of different types.

- 37** A person who is really good at games and sports, but not good at schoolwork can be called:

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- 38** Some people are clever and really like schoolwork, but don't like sport. Often these people also love computers. A person like this can be called:

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- 39** A very popular person or group of people can be called:

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- 40** A person who doesn't have any real friends can be called:

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- 41** A person who wears very fashionable clothes can be called:

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- 42** A person who wears their clothes in unfashionable ways (like tucking their T-shirt in) can be called:

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- 43** A person who takes their skateboard everywhere with them can be called:

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- 44** If your school is a primary school, do you have a word for new entrants as a group?

- ☐ Not a primary school
- ☐ New entrants

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## Section 7

***Note to the teacher: These optional questions ask the students to write answers. If your students have time to attempt these, I suggest that you allot topics to individuals or small groups according to their personal interests. It is not necessary to cover all the questions or activities: any material at all is valuable. If you ask them to do Q's 45, 46 or 47, please use the name they provided for the game instead of the phrase 'the game described in question ...'***

- 45** If children at your school play other variations on ***the game described in question 1*** I would like to know about them. Please give their names and a brief description of the rules.
- 46** If children at your school play ***the game described in question 2*** differently from the way it was described there, I would like to know your rules.
- 47** If children at your school play ***the game described in question 3*** differently from the way it was described there, I would like to know your rules.
- 48** Here are some other games you or younger children at your school may play: marbles, hopscotch, knucklebones, elastics, skipping, ball-bouncing, clapping games.  
If you have time, I would be very interested to know how you play these games, and what words you use when you play them. If you have rhymes to go with them, please write them down. If you follow a printed book of instructions when you play, please don't take the trouble to copy out what is in the book, but say "We follow the book of instructions". However, if you make up your own variations on what is in the book, I would be interested to know the names and rules for these variations.
- 49** Here are some other activities you may be involved in during your spare time:  
skateboarding, riding BMX bikes, playing hacky-sack.  
If you have time, I would be very interested to know if there are special names associated with these activities. Please give the name and describe the activity. For example, you may have a special name for a trick you can do with your skateboard.
- 50** If there are other popular games or activities in your school which I have not asked about, please list them here. I am **not** interested in organised sports where the teachers or coaches have taught you the rules, like rugby, cricket, and netball. I am interested in games where the rules and any words needed are passed on from older children to younger children in the playground. If you have time to write descriptions of any of these, I would be delighted to read them.

**Thank you all very much for your time and effort.**