

## “DARE Questionnaire” Exercise

The following questions are selected from the 1,847 questions that fieldworkers used to collect data from local informants scattered across the fifty states. As the *Dictionary of American Regional English* explains, “Fieldworkers were instructed to ask each question as it is written here, so that the responses would be comparable. Parenthetical instructions to fieldworkers, however, were not read aloud.”

Carefully read through the abbreviated questionnaire. Then some time over the Thanksgiving break ask an older relative (or acquaintance) each of the forty questions. It’s better to do it in person, but a telephone call is okay. Feel free to prompt them for more than one response, because quite often they have more than one way to say something. Record the answers verbatim as much as possible. While you are interested in finding dialectal expressions, your informant may be feeding you “correct” answers, so do what you can to disarm their inhibitions. For questions 5 and 14, record the answers in the Phonetic Alphabet too (these are marked with asterisks to remind you). Do the same for any other answers that seem phonetically interesting. Note that Questions 35-40 are trying to see which verb tense the respondent uses, or how he or she inflects certain strong verbs. Don’t worry if some of the questions draw a blank.

1. What time is this (show picture of clock face at 10:45)
2. Joking way of telling somebody to hurry: You might say, “\_\_\_\_\_!”
3. If the weather is very unpleasant, you say it’s a \_\_\_\_\_ day.
4. Any joking names around here for a very heavy rain? You might say, “It’s a regular \_\_\_\_\_.”
5. \*\*What do you call a small stream of water not big enough to be a river?
6. The part of the house below the ground floor:
7. What do you call the small pieces of wood and other stuff that are used to start a fire?
8. What nicknames to people have around here for a small eating place where the food is not especially good?
9. Soft rolls of dust that collect on the floor under beds or other furniture:
10. A smaller paper container for bringing groceries home from the store:
11. What do you call pages of writing paper glued together at the top with a cardboard back?
12. When the meal is all over, what do you have to do to the table?
13. The meal that people eat at the end of the day: (the same every day?)
14. \*\*What are the parts of an egg?
15. Ordinary soft drinks, usually carbonated—what are they called?
16. The center of a hard cherry: you call that a cherry \_\_\_\_\_.
17. A hand tool used for cutting weeds and grass:
18. What do you put the cow’s head through when she stands in the barn?

19. What do you call a circular arrangement on one level at a big intersection, where cars can go around till they come to the road they want?
20. A small platform sticking out into the water where boats can tie up, and people can get into them:
21. What kinds of squirrels do you have around here? (Open question)
22. What do you call the small insect that flies at night and flashes a light at its tail?
23. Joking names for a head louse, or a body louse:
24. If somebody was caught short of money and went to a friend to get some, he might say, "I need five dollars before Saturday, will you \_\_\_\_\_ it to me?"
25. Somebody who has lost everything and is very poor. "He's a \_\_\_\_\_."
26. Other words for stealing something valuable—for example, a watch: "Yesterday somebody \_\_\_\_\_ my watch."
27. A piece of cloth a woman folds over her head and ties under her chin:
28. Names for underwear, including joking names. Men's---long, men's---short, women's---long, women's---short:
29. What do you call a three-cornered tear in a piece of clothing from catching it on something sharp?
30. Joking name for the part of the body that you sit on—for example, "He slipped and came down hard on his \_\_\_\_\_."
31. What words do people around here use for 'grandfather'?
32. What words do people around here use for 'grandmother'?
33. What games to children play around here, in which they form a ring, and either sing or recite a rhyme?
34. When there's snow, children go down the hill on a \_\_\_\_\_.
35. Something low-grade or of poor quality—for example, a piece of merchandise: "I wouldn't buy that, it's \_\_\_\_\_."
36. Talking about eating: "He feels sick—he must have \_\_\_\_\_ something (that disagreed with him)."
37. Speaking about drinking coffee: "The coffee's all gone—we must have \_\_\_\_\_ (a lot)."
38. Talking about bringing tools: "I was supposed to bring the nails—you should have \_\_\_\_\_ the hammer."
39. About the school bell ringing: "When it was time for school, the bell \_\_\_\_\_."
40. Talking about vegetables thriving: "Last year we fertilized the garden, and the plants really \_\_\_\_\_."