# BlackWords Short Story Lesson Plans

# ‘Big Yengo’ by Bruce Pascoe

The following questions are designed to support the reading and comprehension of ‘Life in Mindingu’ by Sylvia Nakachi. The framework used the [taxonomy of skills in reading and interpreting fiction](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1162351?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) designed by George Hillocks and Larry Ludlow (1984).

## Literal Level

**1. Basic Stated Information**

What is the young man’s job and why are the narrator and young man on this 4WD trip?

**2. Key Detail**

1. Who is Baiame?
2. To whom is the ‘Lament for three hands’ dedicated?
3. What is the name of the abandoned homestead the father and son use as their base in the final days?

**3. Stated Relationship**

1. What causes the narrator’s grief?
2. Who created the hand stencils on the wall of the cave (the son shows the father) and the wall of the house (in the story-within-a-story)?

## Inferential Level

**4. Simple Implied Relationship**

1. What is the *kinship* relationship of the young man to the narrator: the son (i.e. his child to his former wife) or stepson (i.e. the child of the woman he moves in with)?
2. What is the *psychological* relationship between the narrator and the young man?

**5. Complex Implied Relationship**

1. What is the significance of Baiame and other aspects of country (e.g. the birds) in the story?
2. Why does the narrator write the ‘Lament for three hands’? What do you suppose he intends to do with it?
3. About what does the man feels such grief and unhappiness?
4. Why is the story called ‘Big Yengo’?

**6. Author’s Generalisation**

What might Pascoe say about regret at connections between the past and present?

**7. Structural Generalisation**

Is the story-within-story structure effective in helping Pascoe make his points? How might the story have changed if the same information had been included as a conversation around the campfire or as they were driving in the 4WD?