# BlackWords Short Story Lesson Plans

# ‘Life in Mindingu’ by Sylvia Nakachi

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 make-up of Hedge’s family? Draw a family tree with relevant details about family members drawn from the text.

**2. Key Detail**

1. Why do you think Nakachi draws attention to the fact that the tourists ‘all footfalcon barefoot’?
2. What’s the significance of the discreet hand signals that Bab Know and the man exchange?

**3. Stated Relationship**

Did Bab Knox and Hedge know each other (before the story began)? Provide evidence - both direct and indirect.

## Inferential Level

**4. Simple Implied Relationship**

1. What is the irony in the naming of Hedge?
2. Why does Hedge move the sprinkler ‘without any hesitation’?
3. What’s the relationship between Bab Knox and the unnamed man who visits him with news of the dugong? Is the man disrespectful when he calls Bab ‘old man’?

**5. Complex Implied Relationship**

1. Nakachi draws attention to the physical appearance of Babs, the man and Hedge - what do you think is her purpose in doing this?
2. What is the implication of Nakachi’s final image: ‘Without hesitation Hedge slowly….dark piercing eyes of the man’? [Make sure you read the entire quotation from the story.]

**6. Author’s Generalisation**

1. What do you think Nakachi would give as a reason for her choice of title?
2. What do you think Nakachi might be saying about the community relationships, and about the nature of tourism in this story?

**7. Structural Generalisation**

1. The story begins with a long set up describing aspects of Mindingu and telling stories of tourists visiting the town. What function does this serve? What connection does it have with the main part of the story?
2. Throughout the story, there is use of community language (followed by an English translation), what some might regard as ‘non-standard’ English grammar, and the use of community expressions (e.g. mob, footfalcon). What is their significance on the story?