

## The Dragonflies of Summer

Read the passage.

A dragonfly is really nothing like a dragon. It does not breathe fire. It does not have wings like a bat. It does not battle knights.

It does look like it has a long tail. That's because a dragonfly's body is long and thin. But don't be afraid. Dragonflies can't sting you. They're actually good to have around. Why? They eat plenty of mosquitoes and other harmful insects.

Dragonflies are great fliers. Their wings look like lace. They shimmer in sunlight. But the four wings are strong. They help the dragonfly go up to 38 miles per hour. And they help the dragonfly make sharp turns too. The dragonfly is able to zip through the air. It folds its six legs into a basket. Then it catches bugs to eat. Because it is so fast, it can also avoid birds that want to eat it.

A dragonfly spends the first part of its life living underwater. That is when it is called a *nymph*. It lives under rocks and gravel in streams, rivers, and ponds. A nymph eats other insects and small water

animals. But it must watch out for trout. Trout are fish that love eating nymphs. After a while, the nymph grows and leaves the water. It sheds its skin. Soon it flies away.

A dragonfly nymph may live for years in a stream or pond. An adult dragonfly might only live for a few weeks or a few months.

With big eyes that look like beads, a dragonfly can see in different directions at once. It might grow to be quite big for a bug. Some dragonflies measure seven inches from wingtip to wingtip. Prehistoric dragonflies stretched over 28 inches across. They were the size of birds!

Be on the lookout for dragonflies this summer. But don't forget! These bugs are good to have around.



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Answer the questions.

1. Describe how a dragonfly isn't really like a dragon at all. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. True or false? Dragonflies are very good fliers that can zip through the air at up to 38 miles per hour to catch other bugs. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does a dragonfly spend more of its life living underwater or above the ground?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe why it is good to have dragonflies around. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Do you wish today's dragonflies were as big as prehistoric dragonflies? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Answer Key

1. Answers will vary but might include the facts that dragonflies do not breathe fire, have wings like a bat, or battle knights.
2. True
3. It spends more of its life underwater as a nymph.
4. Dragonflies are good to have around because they eat mosquitoes and other harmful insects.
5. Answers will vary.