

Constructed Response Questions - Grade 3
(From SBAC Practice Tests 2013 – Grade 3)

The Dragon Hunter

by Keith Wilson

I am a dragon hunter. Dragonflies, that is! My name is Keith Wilson. I'm an odonatologist. That's a scientist who studies dragonflies. I hunt to discover. So far, I have helped to find many new species, or kinds, of dragonflies.

Flying Colors

About 5,500 dragonfly species buzz around the world. Hunting them is not easy. Many of them live deep in rain forests. To find them, I have to walk through thick bushes. I have to put up with leeches. I even have to watch out for hungry crocodiles.

So why do I look for dragonflies? The answer is simple. I love them! They can speed by. They can make sharp turns and sudden stops. They can hover. They can even fly backward.

Best of all, dragonflies are beautiful. They come in many colors and patterns. Who doesn't like looking at these amazing insects? Take the tropical rockmaster, for example. It is one of my favorites. It has a blue coloring on its body. Other kinds are even more colorful. Some have green, red, or yellow bodies. One even has orange wings.

Super Sizes

Dragonflies come in many sizes. The smallest one is the size of your thumbnail. The largest one would cover your face.

I recently looked for one of the heaviest dragonflies in the world—the giant petaltail. It lives in Australia.

You might think such a large bug would be hard to miss. The petaltail, however, is very rare. Few people have ever seen it. After looking for a week, I spotted several of them zooming around.

Built to Hunt

The hungry petaltails were hunting. Dragonflies are built to hunt. They have two compound eyes. Each eye is made of up to 30,000 smaller eyes.



All those eyes help a dragonfly see everything. Some dragonflies can spot a tasty meal from up to 18 feet away.

Dragonflies have six legs. The insect cannot walk on its legs, however. It uses its four wings to get around. It can soar through the sky at 30 miles an hour, looking for prey.

From Water to Air

A dragonfly begins its life underwater. It hatches from an egg and becomes a larva. A larva is a young dragonfly. It can swim, but it cannot fly.

A larva lives in a lake or stream. It can grow for several years. Then it crawls out of the water. It sheds its hard skin and becomes an adult.

An adult dragonfly doesn't have much flying time. Some adults live for only a few weeks. Others are around for several months. During that time, a dragonfly is very busy. It flies. It hunts. It eats. If the dragonfly is female, it also lays eggs. Soon there will be more young dragonflies.

Dragonflies in Danger

I worry about dragonflies. People are cutting down forests where the bugs live. That could cause some species to die out. I want to protect these tiny dragons for others to see and enjoy.

“Dragonfly Hunter” from National Geographic Explor



Explain how Wilson supports his statement that dragonflies can come in different sizes. Use details from the passage to support your explanation.

Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response includes a correct explanation of how Wilson supports his statement and a correct supporting detail. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

Wilson supports the idea that dragonflies come in many sizes by describing some types of dragonflies. He says the smallest one is about the size of a thumbnail. He says the largest one is the size of a face. He also says that there is a very heavy one that lives in Australia.

A one-point response includes a correct explanation of how Wilson supports his statement or a correct supporting detail.

Sample one-point response:

Wilson says that dragonflies are the same size as a person's thumbnail.

A response that provides neither a correct explanation of how Wilson supports his statement nor a correct supporting detail receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

Wilson says that dragonflies can come in different sizes.



Explain why the author is interested in dragonflies. Use details from the passage to support your explanation.
Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response includes a correct explanation of why Wilson is interested in dragonflies and a correct supporting detail. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

The author is interested in dragonflies because he thinks they are amazing. Dragonflies can hover in the air. They can also fly backward. They come in many colors. Some are red, green, blue, or yellow.

A one-point response includes a correct explanation of why Wilson is interested in dragonflies or a correct supporting detail.

Sample one-point response:

People are cutting down trees where dragonflies live. Some species may disappear.

A response that provides neither a correct explanation of why Wilson is interested in dragonflies nor a correct supporting detail receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

The author is interested in dragonflies.



Explain why the author uses sections in the passage. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response includes a correct explanation of why the author uses sections in the passage and a correct supporting detail from the passage. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

The author uses sections to organize the information about dragonflies. The sections help the reader understand what information will be where. For example, the section Built to Hunt will tell the reader where to look for information about how a dragonfly gets food.

A one-point response includes a correct explanation of why the author uses sections in the passage or a correct supporting detail from the passage.

Sample one-point response:

The section headers summarize the information about dragonflies.

A response that provides no explanation for why the author uses sections in the passage receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

The author uses different sections in the passage.



A student is writing an informational paragraph about growing sunflowers for a class report. The paragraph needs an introduction to the topic. Read the paragraph and directions that follow.

How to Grow a Sunflower

First, put some small stones in the bottom of a large flowerpot. This will help to drain water out of the flowerpot. Next, pour some soil into the flowerpot up to about one inch from the top. Then, place six sunflower seeds in the flowerpot about an inch apart. Gently cover them with soil. Water the seeds every day. Keep the soil moist, or a little wet, until the seeds sprout. Place the flowerpot in a sunny spot in your house. Soon, you will have a sunflower!

Write **at least one** sentence that could be added to the beginning of the paragraph to introduce the topic.

Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response includes at least one sentence that introduces the topic in a specific way. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

Growing a sunflower is easy if you have a flowerpot, sunflower seeds, soil, and water.

A one-point response includes at least one sentence that introduces the topic in a general way.

Sample one-point response:

You can grow a sunflower in your house.

A response that does not provide a relevant introduction for the topic or does not address the task receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

The sunflower is a pretty flower.



A student is writing a research paper for science class about how female lions care for their cubs. Read the paragraphs from two different sources and the directions that follow.

Lion Cubs

Like human babies, lion cubs are born helpless. They are blind their first week of life. During the first few months, lion cubs feed mostly on milk made by their mother. For the first year or more of life, mother lions give their cubs food and teach them how to hunt.

Lion Dens

When a female lion is ready to have a cub, she looks for a den. It might be a cave or under bushes. The den provides cover for the cubs while they are small and helpless. If a mother lion thinks her cubs are in danger, she will move them to a new den. She does this by carrying them, one by one. She carries them between her teeth. This does not hurt the cub, as she holds the loose skin at the back of the neck.

Give **one** detail from **each** source that the student could use to show how female lions care for their cubs.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response includes at least two supporting details that show how female lions care for their cubs. The response must contain at least one detail from each source. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

For the first year or more of life, mother lions give their cubs food and teach them how to hunt. When a mother lion thinks there is danger nearby, she will carry her cubs to a new den. This does not hurt the cubs.

A one-point response includes one detail from only one source.

Sample one-point response:

The female lions have their cubs in a den. This helps to protect the cubs from other animals. The dens could be under some bushes or in a cave.

A response that provides no supporting details receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

I like lions. I learned in science class that lions live in Africa. I would like to see lions someday.