**Sample Constructed Responses - 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

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