



The Southern Damselfly lives on mire (wet heaths or bog) and when it emerges as a fly from being a larva it is about 3cm long and iridescent blue. It is a rare species in the UK.

- The Southern Damselflies are newly emerged and have probably have only been flying for between 5 to 8 days. They fly low looking for a mate in the area around the mire (wet heath).
- The female chooses a stem of an underwater plant and mates with the male laying her eggs inside the stems of underwater plants by cutting holes and inserting them using her ovipositor at the end of her body.
- The larvae hatch out after 4-6 weeks. They have a tough **exoskeleton** and shed these as they grow. A lot get eaten by predators in the water when they are small.
- The larvae live in the water for up to two seasons, wintering in the mud. They shed their **exoskeleton** around 13 times. They grow in the summer months and feed on mayflies and other fly larvae.
- They finally emerge as damselflies after about two years.
- It takes up to a day for their wings to dry before they start to fly looking for a mate and whole lifecycle starts again.

What's the difference between a dragonfly and a damselfly?

Damselflies have wings of equal size and shape which are narrow and attached to the upper part of their bodies. They also have a gap between their eyes and long thin bodies. When resting they hold their wings together.

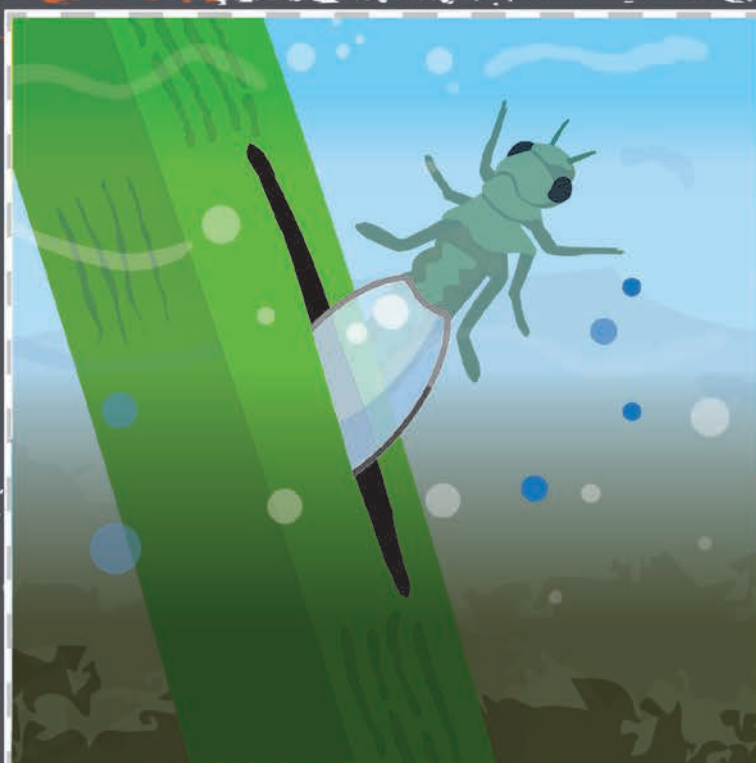
Dragonflies have broader bodies and wider wings that are attached to the upper and middle parts of their bodies. They have eyes that are wrapped around their face and joined in the middle. When resting they hold their wings out like an aeroplane.

ACTIVITY

Cut out and laminate the illustrations of the life cycle to create a set of cards. Now give out a card to each of 6 students and see if they can get themselves into the correct order.

Also cut out each of the 6 points describing the life cycle and ask the students to match them to the picture they describe.





Correct order:

