

## SEEING DOUBLE

As you explore this summer, you may notice something dash past you. What could it be? A bird or a butterfly? It might just be one of our dragonfly friends!

Dragonflies and their look-alike cousins, damselflies, are part of the odonate family. In Massachusetts, you can spot over 160 different types of colorful “odes.” Both dragonflies and damselflies have a long body, two pairs of wings, and large eyes. So, how can you tell which is which? If you think you see a dragonfly, there are a few ways you can know for sure.

### Winged Wonders

First, look at its size. Damselflies are much smaller and more delicate than dragonflies, which have stronger wings to help them fly in any direction or hover like a helicopter. When you see an ode resting on a flower or a branch, look at the wings. If the pair of wings are standing straight up, you found a damselfly; and if the wings are laying flat like an airplane, you’re looking at a dragonfly.

### Thick and Thin

Just like their wings, dragonflies have wide abdomens, the long part of the body between the wings, whereas damselflies have very narrow abdomens. Up close, you may even see lines dividing the sections of the abdomen.

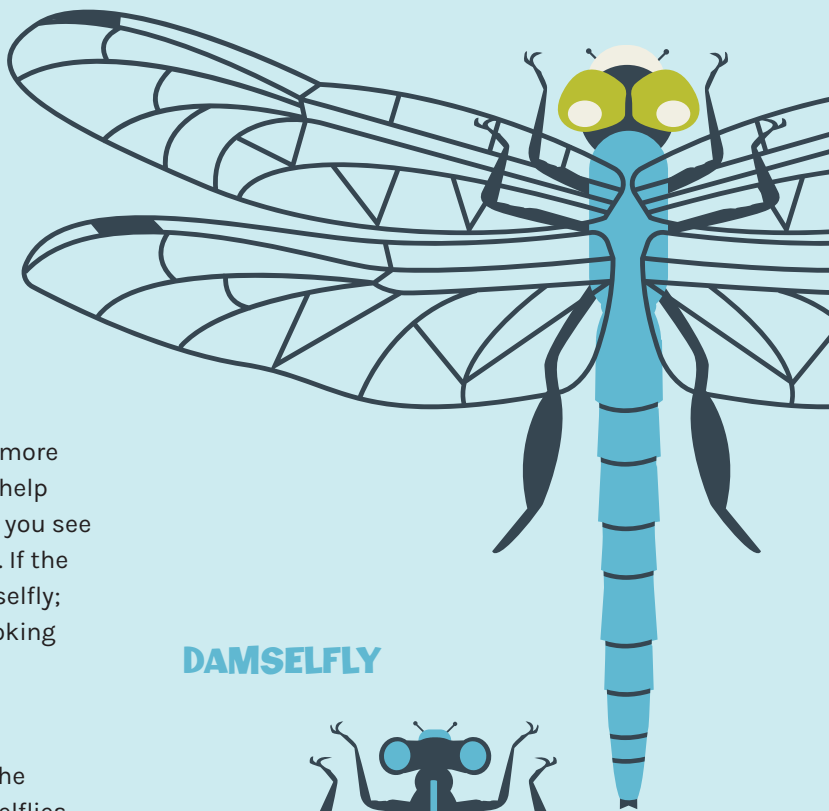
### Staring Contest

Both of these flying insects have large eyes that help them hunt smaller insects, like mosquitos. A dragonfly’s eyes take up most of its head and sometimes they even touch. On the other hand, damselfly eyes are far apart and stick out on the side of its head.

### Your Turn

The next time you’re playing outside or sitting by a lake and an odonate lands on your hand or a nearby twig, try to use some of these clues to figure out if it’s a dragonfly or a damselfly. To help you remember what a dragonfly looks like, you can make your own! Go to [massaudubon.org/youngexplorers](http://massaudubon.org/youngexplorers) for directions.

DRAGONFLY



DAMSELFLY

