



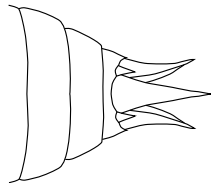
Family Summary Page: Key characteristics for family identification

The shape of the terminal ends of the abdomen distinguish dragonflies (Zygoptera) from damselflies (Anisoptera). In both damselflies and dragonflies, the shape of the lower lip (labium), and the size and shape of the antennal segments distinguish the Odonata families.

a. Terminal end of abdomen

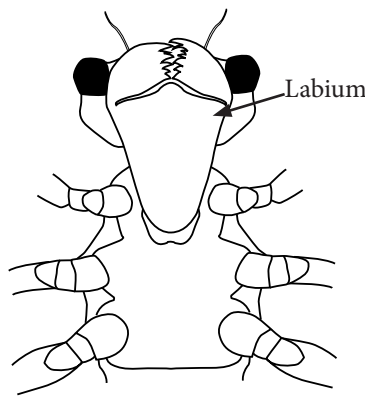


Damselflies (Zygoptera)

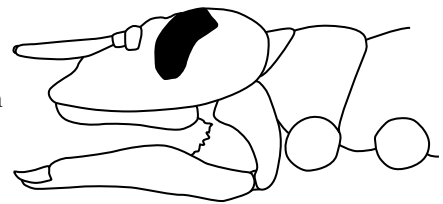


Dragonflies (Anisoptera)

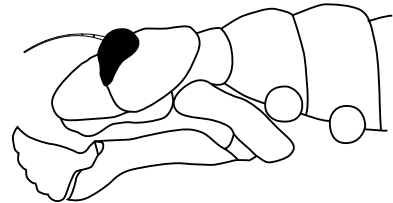
b. Mouthparts



Ventral view of head and labium



Flat labium

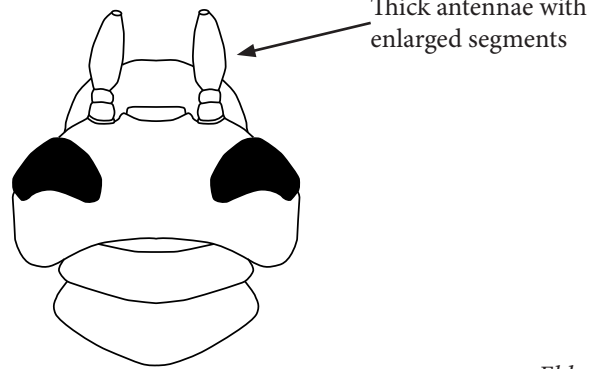
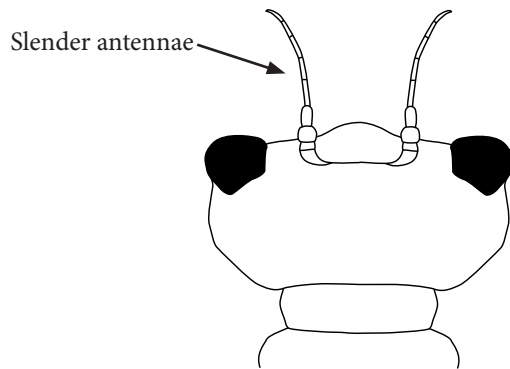


Spoon-shaped labium

Elder

Elder

c. Shape and size of antennal segments



Elder

Mouthparts are unique to this order of insects and important in identification to family. These mouthparts are highly modified for capturing prey. They consist of a hinged arm folded beneath the head which covers the other mouthparts at rest, but is capable of being suddenly thrust forward to grasp prey.