

AIMING FOR
AWESOME



2018

1918



Stealth

Student's Guide



ROYAL
ACADEMY OF
ENGINEERING



The aim of this resource is to give students the opportunity to investigate the impact of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) on making stealth vehicles.



Lightning

Stealth is the ability to evade detection by radar, infrared sensors or emission interception.

Stealth provides greater survivability, and makes it easier for aircraft to operate in contested areas without being detected.

The Lightning aircraft was designed to be hard to detect.

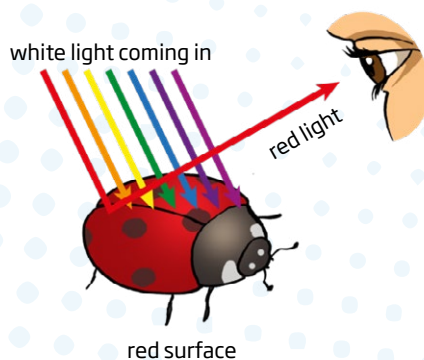
Engineers used a combination of the aircraft's shape and stealthy, radar-absorbent materials to make it a very-low-observable aircraft.

The Lightning is a single-seat, single-engine supersonic jet and has the most advanced computers and networking abilities of any aircraft so far.

The F-35B has short take-off and vertical landing (STOVL) capabilities, meaning it can hover.

Camouflage

Objects reflect different colours of light. The colours that are not reflected are absorbed. This ladybird is red, because it reflects red light.



Some animals can use this to camouflage themselves. Most chameleons change colour as social signalling or a reaction to external temperatures. However, some chameleons can change their colour to camouflage themselves.

Aircraft can also be coloured to camouflage. For example, until 1941, the top of Royal Air Force (RAF) fighter aircraft were painted in dark green and brown to blend in with the ground, and sky colours underneath to avoid being seen from the ground. However, aircraft were lost and pilots reported that the colours used made their fighters conspicuously darker than the sky.



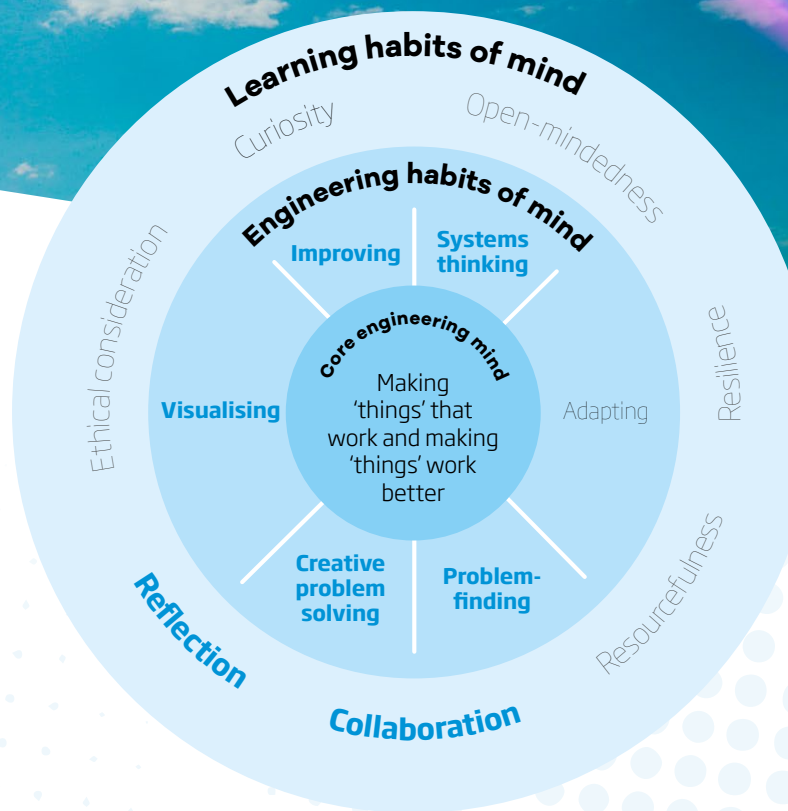
TIME TO INVESTIGATE - 1

How are different colours made?

White light is made up from the colours of the rainbow.

A coloured filter allows some colours to pass through and absorbs the others. For example, a red filter transmits red light only and absorbs all the others, whereas a blue filter will absorb all colours except blue.

The primary colours of light are red, green and blue. View a red, green and blue coloured object through the different filters.



Object colour	Filter colour	Observation
Red	Red	
	Green	
	Blue	
Green	Red	
	Green	
	Blue	
Blue	Red	
	Green	
	Blue	

Explain why the red object appears red through a red filter but black through a blue filter.

STRETCH AND CHALLENGE

Use the filters to work out how to make the secondary colours of light.

Object colour	Filter colour	Observation
Yellow	Red	
	Green	
	Blue	
Cyan	Red	
	Green	
	Blue	
Magenta	Red	
	Green	
	Blue	

Yellow is made of and light.

Cyan is made of and light.

Magenta is made of and light.



Radar detection

Radar can also be used to detect aircraft.

A bistatic radar system has a transmitter and receiver separated by a distance, whereas a monostatic radar has the transmitter and receiver in the same place.

There are many different methods to detect aircraft using bistatic radar, one of which is forward scatter radar. The forward scatter radar technique uses bistatic radars to emit a radar that hits the object and is blocked from the receiver, much like how a shadow is formed. Forward scatter radar is useful because it is not effected by stealth coatings.



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TIME TO INVESTIGATE - 2

The size and shape of an aircraft is also important to consider to avoid it being detected.

Shine a torch on the cut-outs of the RAF aircraft through the ages. What do you notice about the area of the shadows?

Write a method to investigate how the shadow changes for each of the cut-outs.

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To make sure the experiment is reproducible you need to control all the variables, except the independent and dependant variable. The independent variable is what you change each time, in this case the aircraft shape, and the dependent variable is what you measure, in this case the area of the shadow.

What variables are you keeping the same each time?

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Use the table below to record your results.

Aircraft	Area of shadow cm ²

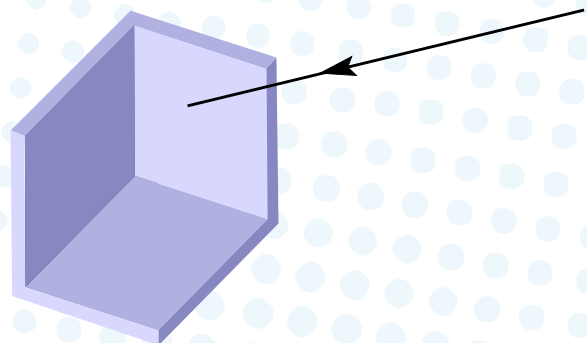
Which aircraft is the best for avoiding forward scatter radar detection?

The backscatter technique uses the reflection of radar to detect and aircraft.

TIME TO THINK

What do you think you will see if you look into the corner cube, or retroreflector?

Do you think it will be different if you look at the vertex from the other side?







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Royal Academy of Engineering

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Make the UK the leading nation for engineering innovation

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Address the engineering skills crisis

Meeting the UK's needs by inspiring a generation of young people from all backgrounds and equipping them with the high quality skills they need for a rewarding career in engineering.

Position engineering at the heart of society

Improving public awareness and recognition of the crucial role of engineers everywhere.

Lead the profession

Harnessing the expertise, energy and capacity of the profession to provide strategic direction for engineering and collaborate on solutions to engineering grand challenges.



The RAF 100 Youth & STEM programme has been designed to engage and inspire young people by building their interest in engineering and technical career pathways.

From cyber specialists to aerospace, aviation, electronics and mechanical disciplines, the RAF is committed to using our centenary celebrations to extend opportunity to all and to encourage greater diversity in this critical area of national skills shortages.



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