This resource supports the Design and Science curriculum areas for students working at upper KS2 and KS3 and Expressive Arts 2nd and 3rd levels. However, it would also support the teaching of History and Literacy, Social Studies and Languages.

This resource provides a filmed introduction to the development and deployment of Dazzle from the experts at IWM alongside Teacher Notes and Suggested Activities including items from IWM’s Collections in addition to links to further resources.

**What?** Camouflage is all about blending in with the background surroundings so well that you are effectively hidden from view! ‘Dazzle’ painting was a form of camouflage devised for ships in the First World War, but ships are incredibly big objects so it was not possible to hide them completely!

What Dazzle could do was to distort and disrupt the outline of the ship; effectively disguising its true length and even the direction it was travelling in.

**Why?** It was created in the First World War as a response to the terrible losses suffered by British sailors and vessels; both warships and ‘merchant ships’ carrying vital cargo. The greatest threat to these mariners and ships came from enemy submarines.

Whilst these sneaky, submersible boats were hard to spot, that was not the case for their targets which were large and often slow moving making them, and the crews that served aboard them, vulnerable targets for often fatal torpedo attacks.

**Who?** Dazzle was created by Norman Wilkinson, a British painter who had also served in the Royal Navy and so understood ships and the sea. With this knowledge he knew that it would not be possible to hide something as big as a ship, but he knew there were ways that he could make life as difficult as possible for a submarine commander to make the necessary calculations to ensure a successful torpedo attack.

Staring through his periscope that commander would have to accurately judge his target’s shape, size, speed and the course (direction) it was travelling in. To make those judgements as hard as possible, Wilkinson proposed using bold designs and ‘violent colour contrasts’ to distort and disrupt the ship’s true outline.

**How?** A Dazzle Section was created under Wilkinson’s command. The team consisted of five artists to draw the Dazzle designs onto paper before three model makers applied the designs to wooden mini ships.

To make sure these designs were truly effective they were placed onto a seascape background and looked at through a periscope to check that each design really was disrupting the length, shape and outline of each model.
Only if the design passed this test would it be passed on to one of the eleven art students in the Section who prepared drawings on white paper of the designs for both sides of each ship. These were then sent to 'outport officers' who were with the real ship ready to supervise the transfer of the Dazzle design from paper to full-sized ship!

_IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War. Our unique collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force._