



# J. M. W. TURNER

## ROMANCE & REALITY

Things to do  
for kids and  
their adults!

Use the activities in this booklet to look closely, talk, sketch, and write about the artwork in the exhibition.

# Who was J. M. W. Turner?

Joseph Mallord William Turner was born in London, England, in the year 1775. His father was a barber. His mother was from a family of butchers and shopkeepers. Even as a child, Turner was a talented artist. When he was only fifteen years old, he exhibited his artwork in a show with adult artists.

Turner lived until 1851. He painted and drew thousands of pictures during his lifetime. He made dramatic pictures of the world as he saw it. Today, artists can paint or draw from photographs, but Turner lived much of his life before the invention of photography. He liked to take his art supplies outside to sketch from real life. Then he brought his sketches back to his studio to paint from them.



Pages from *The Channel Sketchbook*, ca. 1845, sketchbook bound in red calf with marbled endpapers, comprising 88 leaves with 74 watercolors and 26 graphite sketches

**left:** *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1799, oil on canvas, Tate Britain

**cover:** *Vesuvius in Eruption*, 1818–20, watercolor, gum, and scraping out

All works Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, unless otherwise noted.

# Turner's World

Turner lived in a time when many new inventions were changing the world. Steamships became common in the early 1800s. Unlike sailing ships, which depended on wind, steamships were powered by engines that burned coal. In this picture, a steamship blows a cloud of smoke from its smokestack. Imagine the sound of its engine!



**If you were in this picture, what else could you hear?**

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**What could you smell?**

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**What could you feel?**

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*Staffa, Fingal's Cave*, exhibited 1832, oil on canvas

# Views of the Sea



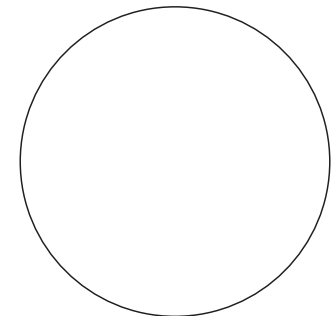
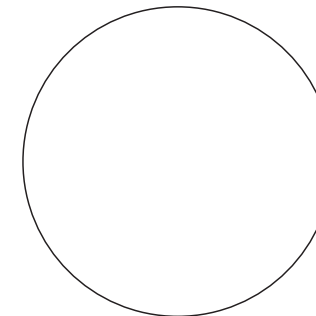
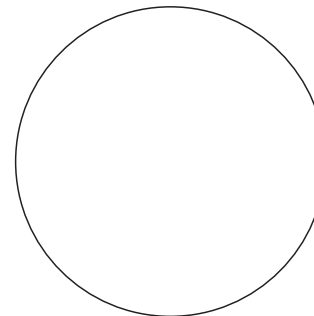
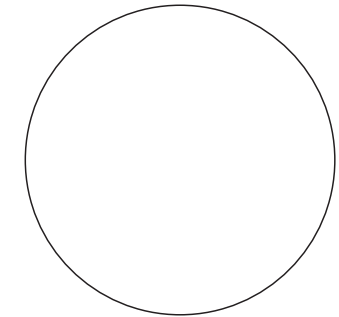
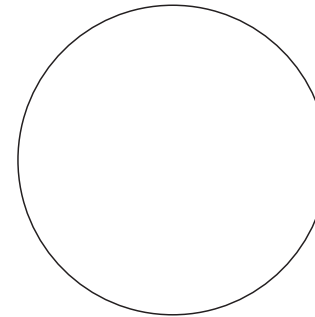
*Dort, or Dordrecht: The Dort Packet-Boat from Rotterdam Becalmed, 1818, oil on canvas*

When Turner made this painting, ships were the best way to transport a lot of cargo and passengers over long distances. Turner's home was in London, but he often traveled to the coast to paint ships, as well as the sea, the shore, the sky, and (sometimes) people.

Can you find these details in this painting?



Draw other details you like in the empty circles.



# Turner's Watercolors

The picture at right is an unfinished **study**, or a practice picture. Turner used a few different techniques in this picture. He used watercolor paint to add color.

Can you find where Turner ...

- used a pencil to draw the outlines of the picture?
- left the paper blank?
- scraped the paint off the paper with a sharp tool to make highlights on the water?
- shaded a rock with his fingerprints?



*On the Washburn*, ca. 1809–15, watercolor, graphite, and scratching out

There is another, more complete version of this picture in the exhibition.

Can you find it nearby? (HINT: It's very close!)

What did Turner include in the other version of the picture that isn't in the version printed here?

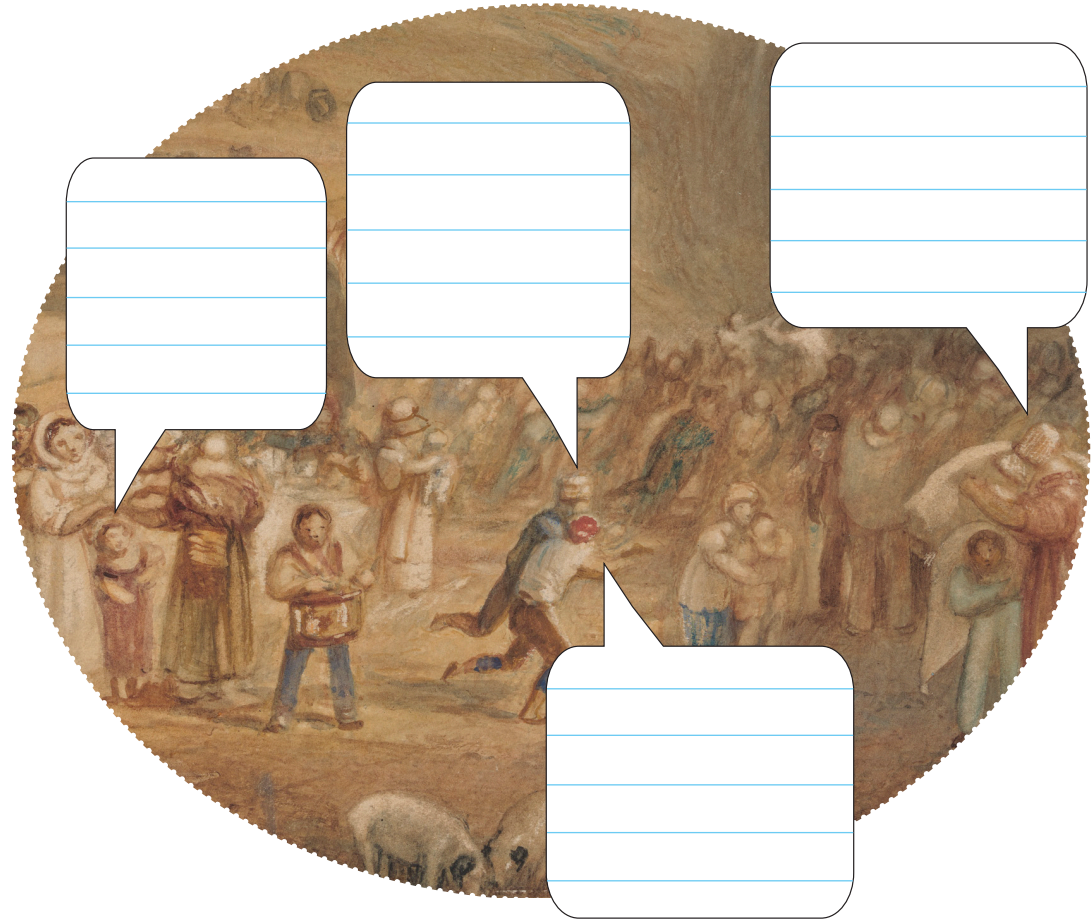
# People in Turner's Pictures

Some of Turner's paintings are full of people doing all kinds of things. This painting shows a local fair, where people might meet friends, go shopping, and eat treats.



*St. Catherine's Hill, Guildford, Surrey, 1830, watercolor, graphite, scraping out, and scratching out*

**Look closely at the people in the picture. In the speech balloons, write what they might be saying.**



# A Competition with the Ocean

Imagine a tug-of-war competition against the ocean! In this picture, the people on the shore are trying hard to pull the contents of a shipwreck out of the ocean.

**What sorts of things do you think they might pull out?**



*Wreckers—Coast of Northumberland, with a Steam-Boat Assisting a Ship off Shore*, exhibited 1834, oil on canvas

**Draw or write your ideas.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to draw or write their ideas based on the painting and the text above.

# A Painter of Color and Light

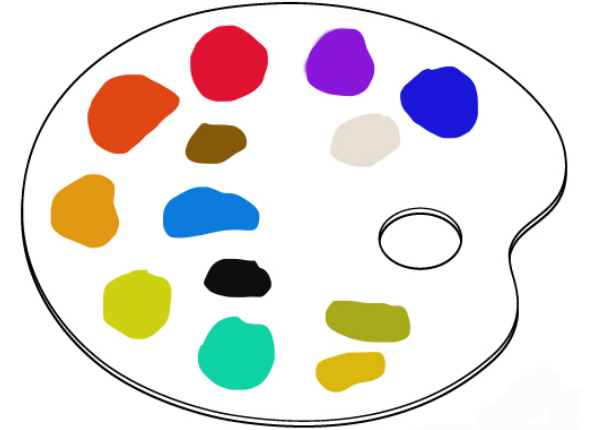
Some of Turner's paintings include very few details. Instead, Turner focused on color and atmosphere. **Atmosphere** includes the light, air, weather, and space in a picture.



*Inverary Pier, Loch Fyne: Morning, ca. 1845, oil on canvas*

Color and atmosphere give mood to a picture. **Mood** is the feeling or emotion that we think of when we look at a picture. For example, some pictures seem joyful or playful, while other pictures seem gloomy or scary.

Circle all the colors you think Turner may have used to make the painting on the left.



What is the mood of this picture?

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Now look back at the painting on page 3. What is its mood?

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What makes these pictures feel that way?

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