

4.a.

## ART ACTIVITY: Turner and Nature - Painting to Music



Link with *English 3A (Victorian Poetry and Nature)*

**TIME NEEDED:** 40 minutes + set up

**AGE:** Year 4/5/6

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Knowledge:** A freeing activity, musical and art appreciation

**Skills:** Painting, freeing up, releasing energy

➤ **MATERIALS:** This could be messy! Big thick cartridge paper or card, paint, big brushes, sponges, palettes or plastic plates for mixing, plastic tubs of water.

### ➤ INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS:

Background: Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775 - 1851) was a Victorian painter who celebrated nature through his energetic paintings. He admired the ferocity of storms and his paintings often show tiny humans lost amid tremendous waves and clouds. Find one for the whiteboard.

- Historically, Turner can be linked to the Victorian scientist Charles Lyell (worksheet 2D) who theorised about nature being a continuous, all powerful force that makes the present world. He can also be linked to the Victorian Romantic Movement, and poets such as Tennyson: *"The moanings of the homeless sea..."* (Worksheet 3A).
- Ask the children - How do they feel when looking at a Turner painting? Do they feel like they are right in that storm? The paintings seem to put their viewers right into the elements; the cold wind and sea spray.
- Maybe work outside standing over sheets of big thick paper, hand out paint and a selection of brushes, including large ones. Provide plenty of water, and if necessary show how they can make different effects by flicking, splattering and sweeping movements.
- Play some storm music, we recommend Vivaldi's *Storm* from *The Four Seasons*, and let the children paint a storm. [Link here.](#)
- Once they have finished, ask them to put a tiny human into the picture.

➤ FOLLOW UP:

- Discuss how it feels to be that tiny human, and our relationship with nature; the natural events we have no control over, but also our effect on nature since the Industrial Revolution. You can refer to the relative length of time humans have been about on the planet (worksheet 1E).
- Other dramatic music you could use: Beethoven's *Thunderstorm* from *Symphony No. 6 in F Major Op. 68 "Pastoral"*, Strauss' Polka *Thunder and Lightning* Gayaneh: 'Storm' or Leonard Bernstein's *Sea Interludes No 4 Storm*.
- Look at other action painters, for example Jackson Pollock. You could do a group action painting on a big long piece of paper, outdoors preferably, working straight from nature.



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