William Turner

14 May 1775 - 19 December 1851
British painter

Private life
* born in London
* father = barber & wig maker
* mother suffered from mental illness
* sent to live with an uncle
* never married - 2 daughters
* buried in St Paul’s Cathedral, London

Career :
• began drawing at an early age
• by age 13, was selling drawings
  • admitted to the Royal Academy of Arts in 1789
  • displayed his work at the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1790
  • traveled a lot through Europe and especially Venice
  • Known as the “painter of light”
• his works are regarded as a predecessor to Impressionism
• 1870 : professor of perspective at the Royal Academy
• produced thousands of pieces throughout his career

What to remember of his art ?
# landscape painter
# brought luminosity and Romantic imagery to his subjects
# his work – initially realistic - became more fluid and poetic
# most famous paintings : dido building Carthage – the Grand Canal, Venice – rain, steam and speed