

Frosty Morning exh1813

JMW Turner (1775–1851)



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Crossing the Brook exh1815

Frosty Morning began as a sketch from a stagecoach in which Turner was travelling through Yorkshire. He has depicted an ordinary place but has transformed it through his use of light. His subject is not only the figures and the appearance of a place but time, change and the atmosphere of wintery morning. The subtle colour gradations tell us that the sun is not yet strong and the frost, which has not yet thawed in the shadows, is painted with a dusting of white. As well as creating atmosphere, Turner has painted the passage of night into day. Looking to the top left, you can see the coach emerging from night. Moving to the right and into day, you can see the men starting work in the trenches as the sun rises above the horizon. Perhaps this depiction of time is reflected in the figures in the foreground, the representation of childhood coupled with old age and the fact that the load on the wagon could be interpreted as a coffin. Later, the painting was admired by French Impressionist Claude Monet who described *Frosty Morning* as being painted with 'wide-open eyes'.

Look at the two paintings above. What season is it, what time of day?

Which of these two scenes would work best as an image on a travel brochure?

What features of *Frosty Morning* might put you off going on holiday there? (Think about the landscape, the people, the weather).

Compare the composition with *Crossing the Brook*. Is it as carefully structured? Does its composition help make *Crossing the Brook* seem like an attractive place to visit?

Can you think why Turner has included the figures and animals? Do they contribute to an underlying meaning?

The French Impressionist, Claude Monet, admired *Frosty Morning*. Compare his *The Magpie* (Musée d'Orsay) with this painting. What similarities are there between the two paintings? What differences are there?

Would the Monet look appealing on a travel brochure?



Claude Monet 1840–1926
The Magpie 1868–9
Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo RMN