Explain how Media and Processes impact on Style and Meaning.

Lets use a music example before we jump into the more obscure world of art…

Remember this is a BRIEF example to give you an idea… a good analysis would be more descriptive, have more detail and depth.

Lets look at GRUNGE music…(how good was it? So good!)

**Media**:

Ie.

The electric guitar (obviously bass and drums are other media used but this is the most obvious)…

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Fender Mustang

A cheap low end model that Cobain liked because…it was cheap!

An **electric guitar** is a [guitar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guitar) that uses a [pickup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pickup_%28music_technology%29) to convert the vibration of its strings into electrical impulses. A signal generated by an electric guitar is too weak to drive a [loudspeaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loudspeaker), so it is [amplified](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guitar_amplifier) before sending it to a loudspeaker. Since the output of an electric guitar is an electric signal, the signal may easily be altered using electronic circuits to add "color" to the sound. Often the signal is modified using [effects](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effects_unit) such as [reverb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reverb) and [distortion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distortion_%28music%29).

Invented in 1931, the electric guitar became a necessity as [jazz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz) guitarists sought to amplify their sound in the [big band](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_band) format.- (good ole wikipaedia)

Processes: (relate it now to how the artist, in this case Kurt Cobain and Nirvana, uses that Media)

ie.

Simple barre chords (explain what these are…)

Distortion pedals (what are these?)

Fast playing-frantic strumming.

Drop ‘D’ tuning (?)

Effect pedals (What kind? What do they do?)

Short solos ,simple, ‘stripped down’…not that technical. “We’re just musically and rhythmically retarded,” -Cobain

Loud, heavily amplified ‘wall of sound’…”mid range turned right up”, not too treble or too bass. Fuzz and feedback a part of the sound.

Style: (use your best adjectives here!!! That’s **describing** words fellas!)

In music you would use things like composition, tone, pitch, volume, tempo, rythym, notes, harmony, key, image etc… I think!!

Ie.

Dark and Moody. Thoughtful, introspective, a bit gloomy and sombre

Loud, soft, loud progressions combining grinding, heavy distortion and melodic harmonies. “slower tempos and dissonant harmonies”.

‘Violently’ played. Often leading to out of tune sound.

Fast paced, quick tempo, short ‘punk inspired’ songs mixed with splashes of heavy metal ‘grinding’ sound. “We sound like the Bay City Rollers after an assault by Black Sabbath,” –Cobain.

Screaming, garbled or growling lyrics.

Chunk Taylors, baggy jeans, long hair and op-shop clothing, (especially grandpa cardigans!). Looking unclean, unkempt, greasy and a bit dodgy.

Rejected theatricality like Glam rock or most other rock of the time.

Often out of key, out of tune, out of time. Perfection was not the goal…in fact imperfection was embraced.

Meaning and mood: Time to sum it all up and evaluate it…link it back to some of what we mentioned….link it back to the medium…ask “could this have been done without the electric guitar and the way it was played?”

Grunge was an angst filled retaliation against the commercialisation of 90s pop and a denial of capitalist values… “a denial, a denial, a denial”. This is seen in Cobains choice of guitar, clothing and no-frills style of playing. Its cheap and straight to the point. No frills. In fact it the musical equivalent of the homeless poet or philosopher compared to the extravagent, superfluosness, pomp and show of the buisnessman in his stately mansion. A Completely stripped sound, not complex, no unnecessary bits. No showing off.

This was Grunge carving its own genre or niche out of a fusion of punks fast paced riffs, metals grinding, loud intensity and rock’s passion and feeling - establishing itself against the establishment. Cobains ‘dirty riffs and wry lyrical hooks with the roughly played, out-of-tune guitars’ is a bold statement designed to shock those outside his generation and give an angsty voice to the melancolic, introspective youth of the nineties that also want to jump around and express their frustration with violent mosh pit, body flinging excitement.

The fuzzed out, feedback and heavy distortion gave social alienation a sound and Cobains long blonde greasy locks had the same message as a middle finger, directed towards the mainstream. This was the rise of the ‘alternative’. Grunge was a symbol of all that was NOT mainstream. Ironic considering how popular it was!

Stripped down music. Dirty. Simple. In your face. But also deep, meaningful. It had a message. It aimed to make you feel something. Even if that was sad or angry. Grunge argued, in its own gloomy, sombre way against the rosey, polished, bright and shiny sugar coated candy world of Pop. That it was better to be sad or angry about a harsh truth than smiling in ignorance …“with the lights out, its less dangerous”. And the harsh truth was that it was tough being a teenager. They sang of the dark side of sex, drugs, temptation, violence, family, loneliness, despair, isolation, being awkward, being angry, hypocrasy, the system…and could any of that been as effective without the power, ringing distortion, volume and rawness of the electric guitar?

Na. I seriously doubt it.The ability to jarr the listener from soft melodic riffs into screamingly loud, fuzzy power chords only has the impact when played through the electric guitar in the frantic way they played it. It’s electric nature “adding color to the sound”, even if this colour was dirty browns and greasy yellows. It was the perfect instrument for the tormented souls and roller coaster emotions of generation X youth, one minute quiet and sombre, wanting to be left alone, the next smacking you in your face and demanding your attention with a violent attack of volume saying “…here we are now, entertain us!”.