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Exploring The Role of Typography in Documentary Videos: A Case Study on Mineral Resources

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the capabilities of typography to enhance communication and audience engagement in documentary videos, specifically regarding education content on mineral resources. The stimulus comes from the growing contribution of visual communication towards effective presentation of complex environmental information. Although it is widely applied in multimedia, typographic design's contribution to learning and memory of messages delivered via video-based learning has not been exhaustively researched. This research addresses the deficiency of typographic design rules in documentary settings, particularly for scientific and environmental content. Using a qualitative content analysis method, the paper investigates five documentary clips on YouTube that utilize motion and animated typography. Each cut was analysed for typographic aspects such as font, size, colour, alignment, and motion effects with particular focus on how they contribute to the clarity of the message, visual sequence, and understanding by the audience. The findings were recorded systematically in screenshots and coding matrices. The results indicate that thoughtful typographic design, especially through aligned planning and motion effects can significantly enhance viewer understanding and recall. This means typography is not merely a stylistic component but also a functional one in effective educational media. The findings encourage more systematic, context-dependent applications of typography in motion graphics and suggest future research in interdisciplinary visual communication methods.

1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the role of typography in achieving effective communication and audience engagement in documentary videos, specifically within the context of educating individuals regarding mineral resources. It examines the ways in which typographic characteristics such as font choice, hierarchy, animation, and placement contribute to visual readability, message retention, and overall viewer comprehension within motion graphic narratives.

Typography has moved beyond static text in print and become a powerful visual element in multimedia environments. In the context of motion design, especially documentary videos, typography is not only an instrument used for conveying information, but also as a stylistic tool that also impacts narrative pace and tone. With the continued expansion of the need for visual communication in educational institutions and new media

storytelling, designers seek creative means to solve difficult problems such as mineral excavation, environmental administration, and sustainability. Mineral deposits are too often treated as aseptic or pedantic subject matter and require compelling delivery strategies to relate scientific facts with public sensitization. Experiential, functional typography using motion graphics is a beguiling proposition.

1.1   Research Objectives

This research objective is to examine how the uses of typographic components in documentary videos of mineral resources by analysing typographic components such as font style, size, hierarchy, and motion effect.

1.2   Problem Statement

There is a lack of research on how typography affects cognitive processes in documentary videos. According to Ouwehand and de Ridder (2010), very few studies have explored how different typographic styles can influence learning, memory, and understanding in video-based education.

Additionally, there are limited typography design guidelines tailored specifically for documentary videos. Velasco and Spence (2019) point out that current guidelines are often too general and do not consider the emotional and thematic needs of documentary video. Furthermore, Krahn and Morss (2020) highlight that dynamic typography, which could be a powerful tool for raising environmental awareness, is not being used to its full potential. This shows a need for more creative and context sensitive uses of typography to better support environmental messaging.

Designers find it difficult to choose typographic components in documentary videos that maximise viewer engagement and help viewers retain complex information if they do not conduct enough research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a thorough grasp of the role of typography in enhancing communication in documentary videos, particularly those focused on mineral resources. Existing research highlights how typographic components such as typeface, font size, colour, alignment, and motion effects contribute significantly to visual clarity and audience engagement. For instance, typeface choice can influence the tone and readability of the content, while font size and colour affect visibility and emotional emphasis. Alignment plays a key role in guiding viewer attention across the screen, and motion effects such as kinetic typography add a dynamic layer that enhances narrative pacing and viewer retention. Studies by Velasco and Spence (2019) and Krahn and Morss (2020) emphasize the growing importance of typography not only as a design tool but as a communicative device that shapes how audiences process complex information. In the context of educational videos on scientific subjects like mineral resources, thoughtful use of typography improves visual hierarchy, facilitates information retention, and makes abstract or technical topics more accessible and engaging. Through an examination of current design methodologies and multimedia communication theories, the literature supports the idea that typography is a foundational element in achieving effective instructional design within motion graphic content.

2.1   Font Size

Font size indicates how large or small the characters appear on a screen or printed page, usually measured in points (pt). It affects legibility and visual hierarchy in a text. Larger font sizes are often used for titles and headings, while smaller sizes are typical for body text.

2.2   Colour

Colour in typography or design refers to the hue applied to text or other visual elements. It influences emotional tone, brand recognition, and readability. Colour choices can enhance the aesthetic appeal and guide the viewer's attention within a layout.

2.3   Alignment

Alignment is the arrangement of text or graphics in relation to a page or container's margins. Common types include left-aligned, right-aligned, centre, and justified. Proper alignment creates visual order, improves readability, and supports the

2.4   Motion Effects

Motion effects involve the use of animation or movement applied to text and graphic elements, especially in digital or video formats. These can include transitions, fades, scaling, or rotation. Motion effects enhance viewer engagement, highlight key information, and add dynamic interest to visual storytelling.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1   Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative content analysis methodology to investigate the role of typography in explainer videos related to mineral resources. The study involves selecting five documentary videos from YouTube based on their relevance to environmental or scientific education and their use of motion or animated typography. Each video was analysed to identify and evaluate typographic components including typeface, font size, colour, alignment, and motion effects. The analysis focused on how these elements contribute to visual hierarchy, viewer attention, and message clarity. Data were collected through detailed observation, including screenshots and time-stamped annotations, and were organized using a coding matrix to compare typographic techniques across samples. This approach allowed for the identification of design patterns and best practices that enhance viewer comprehension and engagement. The findings aim to provide insights for educators, designers, and content creators seeking to improve the effectiveness of educational motion graphics through thoughtful typographic design.
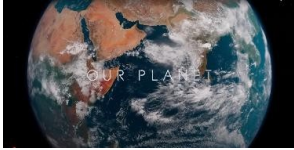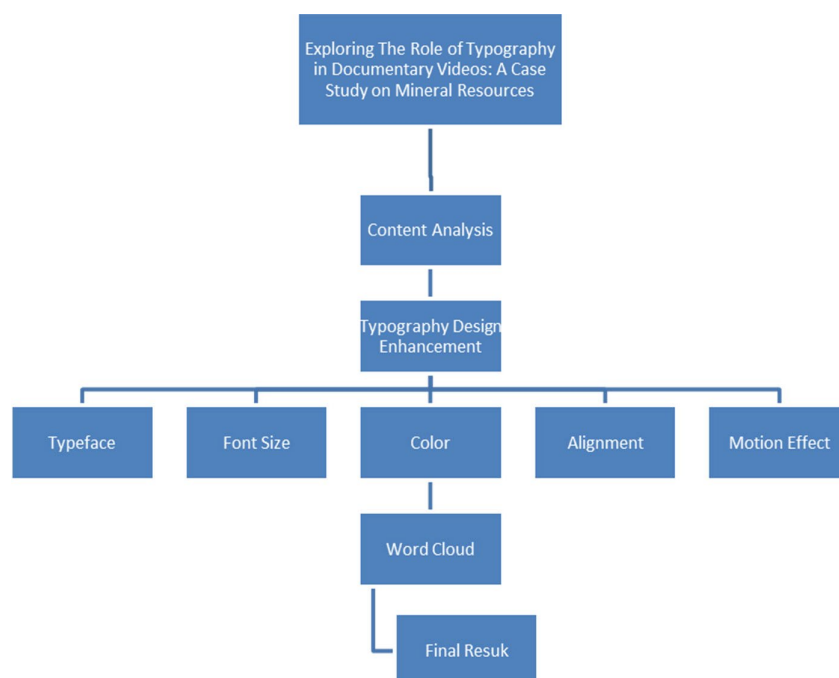
Figure 1 Framework of Study

4 DATA COLLECTION

The selection criteria for documentary video were based on how the typography is used in documentary video. The selection of the sample for this study is based on the criteria outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Selection Sample of Documentary Video

	Example Of Documentary Videos	Publisher	Publication Date	Platform
Sample 1	Our planet | Coastal Seas | FULL EPISODE | Netflix	Netflix	17 April 2020	YouTube
Sample 2	Salt in their Veins | Full Award-Winning Documentary	Rita Hencke	28 Jan 2025	YouTube
Sample 3	Mountains (Full Episode) | Hostile Plane	National Geographic	15 December 2020	YouTube
Sample 4	El Salvador Mega Prisons For Deadly Maras Gang Members | Witness | Gang Violence Documentary	Witness	27 November 2024	YouTube
Sample 5	Psycho Killer | Interview with a Killer S2 E1: Gary Hilton	COURT TV	15 April 2025	YouTube

5 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The data were analysed thematically to identify typeface, font size, colour, alignment, and motion effects across all 5 selected Documentary Videos.

5.1 Data Analysis

The typographic critique of five selected documentary videos revealed several repeating patterns and thematic choices that influence tone, narrative resolution, and emotional resonance. The findings are tabulated into five prominent aspects: typeface, size, colour, alignment, and motion effects.

Table 2 Data Analysis of Typography in Documentary Video

| SAMPLE	Typeface (Font)	COMPONENT OF TYPOGRAPHY			
		Size	Colour	Alignment	Motion Effect
1	Modern and clean, this geometric sans-serif font features stylized cuts in letters like "R" and "A," giving it a futuristic, minimalist look that complements scientific and environmental themes.	The font is large, ensuring high visibility and legibility over detailed satellite imagery. Its prominent size emphasizes the importance of the title and creates a strong visual impact.	The stark contrast between the dark Earth background and the white text makes it easier to read. The colour reinforces the documentary's clean, factual, and environmental narrative by standing for clarity, neutrality, and purity.	To preserve balance and focus without obstructing important visual components, the text is centred and placed in the lower third. This typical cinematic placement successfully directs the viewer's attention.	The title probably makes use of gentle zooms or fade-ins to produce a serene, engrossing effect that goes well with the tone and polished presentation of the documentary.
2	A modern, neutral tone suitable for the narration of an educational documentary is reflected n a clean, sans-serif typeface, probably Helvetica or a comparable style, that is intended for readability and clarity.	A font that is medium in size to guarantee readability without overpowering the image. Suitable for subtitles or narrators in documentaries, it is balanced to be readable over a moving background.	High legibility is ensured by the white font's striking contrast to the dark ocean background. In keeping with the factual and observational narrative style, the colour also represents neutrality and purity.	The horizontal and vertical centre alignment of the text provides symmetry and keeps the viewer's attention. In keeping with the visual storytelling pace, the alignment encourages a serene, introspective tone.	In sync with the voiceover, subtitles appear as timed pop-ins or with smooth fades. This understated motion effect maintains viewers' attention without interfering with the documentary's narrative flow.
3	A modern, tidy, and refined tone is conveyed by a thin, geometric sans-serif font that is probably comparable to Avenir or Lato. It exhibits professionalism and fits in with the visual and factual style of the documentary.	"Norway" is much smaller than "Telemark," which is big and powerful. By directing the viewer's attention and prioritizing the location name over the regional label, this establishes a clear hierarchy.	Legibility is improved by the white font's good contrast with the cool, snowy background. The colour complements the scene's environmental tone by conjuring feelings of clarity, coldness, and purity.	The text is centred horizontally. The text enhances rather than detracts from the scenic imagery thanks to this well-balanced arrangement that blends in with the symmetrical aerial shot.	Has a subtle zoom effect or a smooth fade-in. The serene and engrossing viewing experience is maintained by this sparse motion, which goes well with the serene aerial footage.
4	The typeface, which is probably Helvetica or a related variation, is a crisp, contemporary sans-serif that provides a neutral, businesslike tone appropriate for documentary titles. Regular weight, devoid of bolding or italics, guarantees readability and objectivity while upholding a sombre tone consistent with the documentary's topic.	The subtitle is somewhat smaller to preserve hierarchy without obscuring the main title, "El Salvador," which is much larger.	To ensure maximum legibility and create a stark, dramatic tone, the white font colour stands out sharply against the black background and night imagery.	The symmetrical aerial view of the prison complex is enhanced by the centre alignment of all text, which directs the viewer's attention there.	The title is introduced smoothly and without interruption with a subtle fade-in, which is probably used (common in documentaries) to reinforce a sombre and reflective tone.
5	Serif fonts are often used in crime or legal genres because they convey formality and seriousness. It gives the topic of criminal investigation and justice more substance and gravity. Most of the text is in regular serif, but the word "Killer" is bold and a little distressed, which adds psychological tension and highlights the main theme of danger and crime.	"Interview" and "Killer" are significantly larger than "with a," establishing a visual hierarchy that highlights key themes and maintains viewer focus on critical content.	While "Killer" is in blood red, which is visually arresting and represents violence and emotional urgency, the text is white and light grey, creating a contrast with the dark background.	A left-aligned layout allows the image of the interrogation room to take up most of the right visual space while providing a grounded structure and a natural reading flow.	Particle fade effects and subtle zoom-in heighten the tension. Its psychological impact and thematic emphasis on crime are heightened by the slightly later animation of the red title.

6 RESULTS
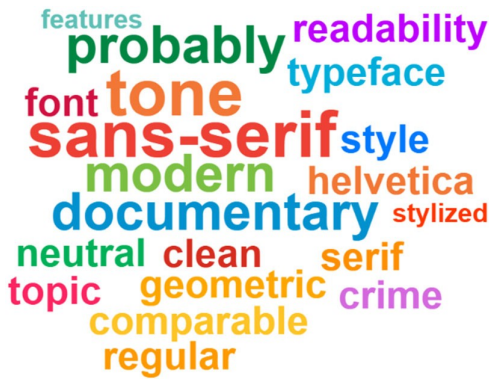
Figure 5 *Result of Font Type Analysis in Documentary Video*

Figure 6 *Result of Size Analysis in Documentary Video*

Figure 7 *Result of Colour Analysis in Documentary Video*

Figure 8 *Result of Alignment Analysis in Documentary Video*

Figure 9 *Result of Motion Effect Analysis in Documentary Video*

Font Type	Size	Colour	Alignment	Motion Effect
Sans-serif	Hierarchy	Contrast	Focus	Effect
Modern	Visibility	White	Symmetrical	Motion
Readability	Importance	Clarity	Centred	Fade-in
Tone	Legibility	Represents	Aerial	Gentle
Typeface	Imagery	White	Directs	Zooms

7 CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes by showing that typography is essential for improving communication, viewer engagement, and understanding in documentaries, especially those that deal with complicated topics like mineral resources. The study found that visual hierarchy, message clarity, and viewer retention are greatly influenced by elements such as font style, size, colour, alignment, and motion effects. This was determined through a qualitative analysis of five chosen documentaries. The results demonstrate that typography is a strategic tool in educational media design rather than just a decorative element. Content producers can turn otherwise complex or technical content into aesthetically pleasing and easily understood narratives by

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implementing careful, context-specific typographic selections. To facilitate more efficient information sharing, this study promotes more investigation into the multidisciplinary uses of typography in motion graphics.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors played equal contributions towards the production of this paper.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

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