



Storytelling Foundations:  
Craft a Storyboard to Compel an Audience



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# Workbook Summary and Learning Objectives



## Workbook Summary

Exceptional leaders harness the power of storytelling to capture an audience and ignite the desire for change. But how do they do it? Discover how a storyboard is the foundation of storytelling to organize concepts into a main idea and three-part structure. Practice structuring a tale of your choice to explore the techniques of storyboarding. Then, craft an upcoming communication using a storyboard to inspire your audience to action.

## Learning Objectives

- Explain storyboarding as a tool to organize a message.
- Describe the essentials of storyboarding including the main message, setting and define the three-part structure, to create key moments in storytelling



# Great Leaders Plan Great Stories

Storytelling has the power to ignite the imagination and transport an audience to a realm of possibilities. Leaders often use storytelling to communicate a message and help an audience imagine something new. Leaders like Walt Disney created a fantastical world of animated characters; Martin Luther King described a dream of equal treatment and respect; and Steve Jobs revolutionized technology with a device no one had imagined before. Leaders like these carefully planned their stories and took the time to organize their message.

As a leader you have a message to share. You can craft your stories using the same tool great storytellers used—a storyboard. Using a storyboard will help you create a well-structured message and clearly communicate to your audience.



## Introspection



Take some time to consider your own thoughts around storytelling and creating stories.

What was the last great story you heard and how did it impact you?

How would you like to improve as a storyteller?

How could a tool like a storyboard improve your communication and persuade your audience?



# The Storyboard Essentials

Storyboards are a powerful tool during the creative process and can facilitate idea generation, provide a linear structure, and serve as a powerful visual reference. Note that this process may seem linear but the assembly of a storyboard can be non-linear, much like the creative process. You are encouraged to create a storyboard using whatever tools suit you—markers and sticky notes, a whiteboard, or digital tools that allow you to brainstorm and create.

Here are some helpful tips to consider when storyboarding.

## **Narrow in on a main idea.**

It is important to identify the essence or heart of your message. A helpful exercise is to describe your main idea in a few sentences, similar to an “elevator pitch” and write it at the top of your storyboard.

## **Establish the setting.**

Invite the reader or listener into your story by painting a vivid picture. Include details that describe the time, place, and environment to help ground your audience in the narrative.

## **Use the 3S Structure.**

This is a technique you can use to create the high-level architecture for your storyboard. It closely resembles Aristotle’s story arc and incorporates elements from The Hero’s Journey by Joseph Campbell. The 3Ss are: Spark, Struggle, Spur.

On the next page, explore how the 3S Structure applies to traditional storytelling and in a business context. Look for a film icon to see how a film like *Star Wars* used the 3S Structure.



# The 3S Structure: Spark, Struggle, Spur

## Spark: Grab the audience’s attention

Great stories start at the beginning with a spark. The Spark is what pulls the listener in and grabs their attention.

In a traditional story, the spark might be the moment when a seemingly normal character is called on an extraordinary mission—a fight between good and evil. They must leave where they are comfortable and go into the unknown.

The goal of the Spark is to disrupt the status quo and invite the audience on a journey. When searching for the spark of your business story, one way to start is by describing the way things are.

*In a business context, identify a process, product, or a way of thinking that is familiar to your audience, but presents an opportunity for change. Create a common foundation and establish the opening scene where the journey will begin.*

*Then, starkly contrast the status quo with a new, compelling solution. Show your audience a new state of being. This high contrast between the status quo and new possibilities ignites the spark, capturing the listener’s interest and making them lean in for what is ahead.*



3S Structure & *Star Wars*: Luke leaving his home to help fight against the Empire.

## Struggle: Describe the challenge

With the spark ignited, it’s time to fan the flame. The middle of the story is where the main character often faces challenges and works to overcome them. We call this section the Struggle. During this stage, the main character may solicit or receive help from others and obtain tools to help them along the journey.

*The same way a main character wrestles with the conflict, a story in business can do the same. Describe the possible outcomes to the audience, and their role in making change happen. Show them how they will get there, the tools they need, and who can help them along the way.*



3S Structure & *Star Wars*: Luke receives training from his mentor, wields a lightsaber, and learns to use the Force. He is empowered to save Princess Lei and defeat the Galactic Empire.





## Spur: Create the call to action

Once you have opened with a spark and introduced a struggle, you need to close your story with a call to action. We call this the spur.

The audience should feel a need for change—a desire to create change or change in themselves. The change could be external, like in social justice, government, processes, or internal change, like a change in perspective or approach.



**3S Structure & *Star Wars*:** Luke saved the galaxy and restored peace. More importantly he learned he has what it takes to be a hero — and the audience sees someone like themselves. Someone ordinary capable of doing extraordinary things.

*As you craft your story, think about what you want your audience to do differently. Consider the deeper meaning and reinforce why they should commit to your message.*

*They have seen a new possibility, learned about the tools they need and are open to embracing a new perspective. It's time to send them off empowered to make that change a reality. The same way a main character wrestles with the conflict, a story in business can do the same. Describe the possible outcomes to the audience, and their role in making change happen. Show them how they will get there, the tools they need, and who can help them along the way.*



# Structure the Story

You’ve explored the essentials of storyboarding: Main Idea, Setting, and 3S Structure. Before planning a story or message of your own, apply the techniques of storyboarding to an existing story.

**Instructions:** Select a story of your choice—it could be a film, speech, short story, etc.—and place it into a storyboard. As you review the story, organize the story into the main idea, setting, and the 3S structure.

Story Title:

Summarize the Main Idea

Explain the main message of the story in 2-3 sentences.

Set the Scene

Describe the time, place, and environment to help your audience imagine where the narrative takes place.

Spark Intrest

How does the story capture the audience’s attention?

Struggle Leads to Resolve

How does the main character or narrator solve the challenge?

Spur to Action

What is the call to action for the audience? How is the audience’s perspective challenged to think, feel, or do about something?



# Storyboard the Message

**Instructions:** Consider an upcoming message you need to share as a leader with a group. Use this storyboarding to organize the essential components of your message. Planning the key moments in your story will help with delivering clear communication and inspire your audience to take action.

**Story Title:**

**Summarize the Main Idea**  
Explain the main message of the story in 2-3 sentences.

**Set the Scene**  
Describe the time, place, and environment to help your audience imagine where the narrative takes place.

**Spark Intrest**  
How does the story capture the audience’s attention?

**Struggle Leads to Resolve**  
How does the main character or narrator solve the challenge?

**Spur to Action**  
What is the call to action for the audience? How is the audience’s perspective challenged to think, feel, or do about something?



# Share Your Story with the Audience



At the final stage, you have a clear framework and message for your story. It’s time to create impact by sharing it. As a best practice, it’s a good idea to share it with someone who is new to the content. Discuss what you included in your storyboard and ask for feedback. The goal of feedback is to determine whether your message is clear and compelling.

Here are some suggested questions to ask when requesting feedback:

Was the content presented in an organized way you could easily follow and remember? Why or why not?

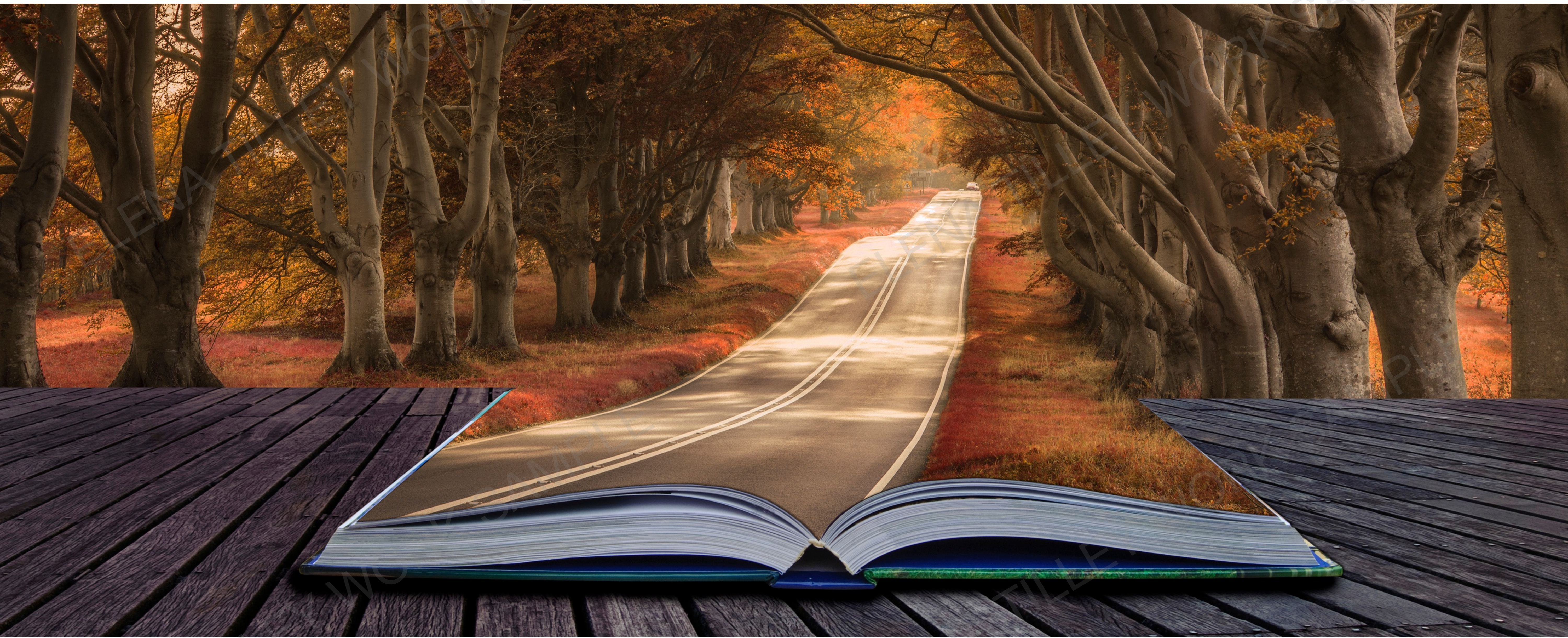
Were the stories and facts shared relevant, or not, to the message?

Based on what’s in the storyboard, how will it influence you to change either how you think or act?

What other information could be share to be more impactful?



# Epilogue



As you create stories that are relevant and compelling, consider how you will inspire your audience to imagine a new reality. Using a storyboard as a planning tool empowers you to ignite a spark in your people, redefine struggle into success, and spur the audience to action.

You don't have to be a master storyteller like Disney, MLK, or Jobs. But you can plan and organize your story with same level of passion, enthusiasm, and intentionality as a master storyteller. You can move your audience to action and transform the hearts and minds of people around you; they, in turn, can revolutionize the business and actualize your idea. With the power of story, you have the ability to create change and inspire people to think differently, ultimately creating a lasting connection and impact only possible through storytelling.



