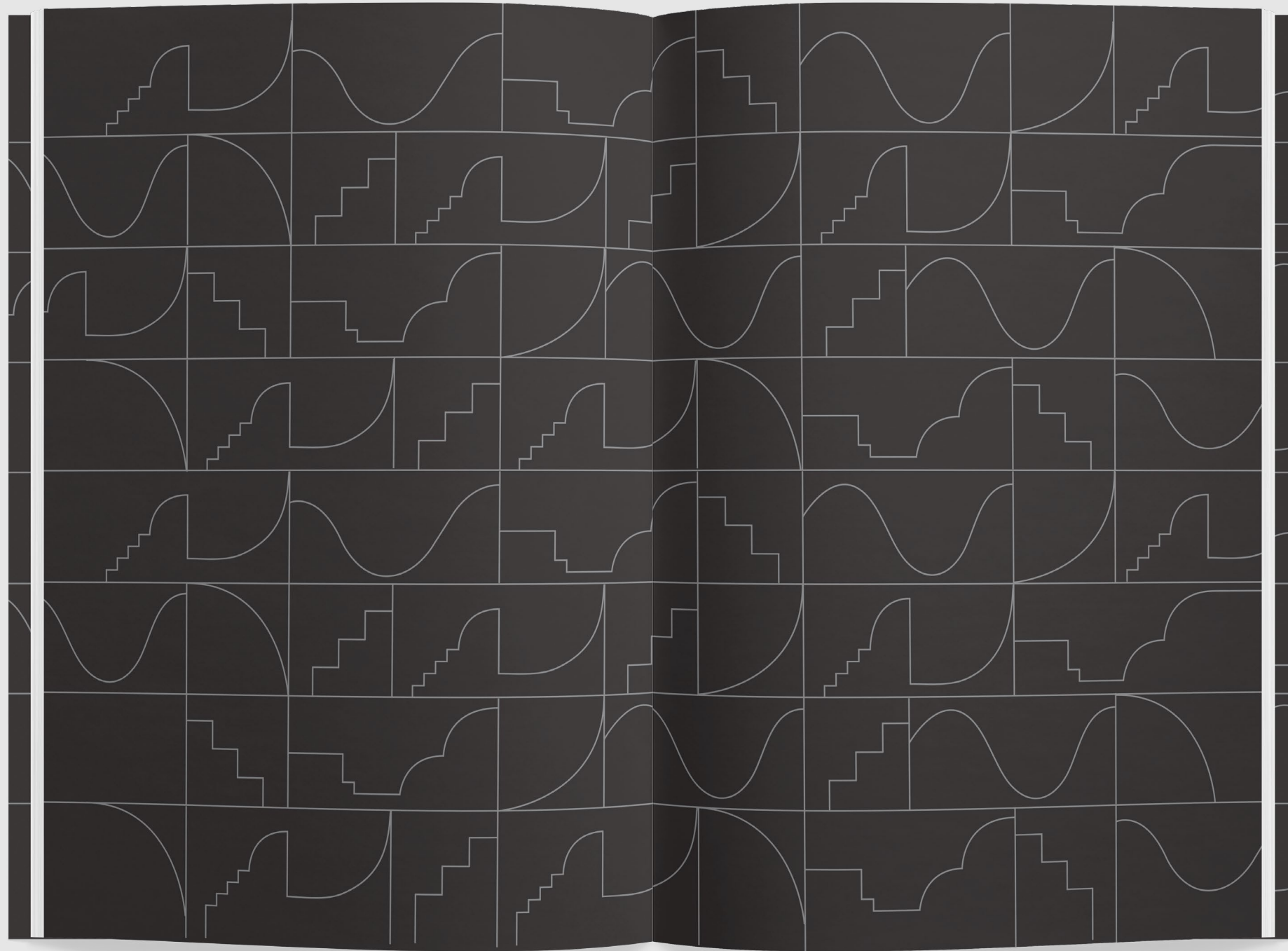


# Once upon a time—

The Art & Craft of Storytelling



Tell me a fact and I'll learn.  
Tell me a truth and I'll believe.  
But tell me a story — and it  
will live in my heart forever.

Ancient proverb

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## Introduction

Why do we tell stories?

1

To **connect** with  
each other

Stories are a common  
language that crosses  
barriers and preserves  
history

They help us to communicate  
feeling, emotion, and information  
about the world around us.

Telling stories is simple, really,  
something humans are naturally  
talented at. After all, it's that search  
of connection, of relating, that  
sets us apart.

If it's so simple, then,  
why is it so hard to do well



**That's the  
magic**

**That's what  
makes it  
interesting**

Technology can be  
intimidating and seem  
complicated — until it's  
seen in the **context** of  
everyday lives

By identifying how technology  
empowers, in a language that's  
understandable, stories enable  
people to relate, to understand,  
and to identify how the successes  
of others could be their own.

Part luck. Part improvisation at  
times. But at its heart, memorable  
storytelling, the kind that touches,  
inspires, and delights, is a craft.

Like any craft, telling impactful  
stories has a few reliable  
components, ones worth  
practicing, bits that get a little  
better every time we try them.

## The Five Ps

The key ingredients  
of a good story

2



# People

## Good stories are about people

Humans doing human things.  
They're people you can relate to.

Sometimes colorful, often  
complicated, and always on a  
journey, people are at the core  
of any memorable story.

# Place

## Good stories take place into consideration

If stories help us share and understand what it is to be human, place is context for cultivating that connectivity.

Be mindful of it.

Place is an instrument of learning more about the people that inhabit your stories.

Place can also be a character.

# Pictures

Good stories have  
compelling **pictures**

Pictures are memorable.

They touch our senses in ways  
words cannot.

Powerful pictures have people  
and perspective.



“The main power I have  
inside me is potential.”

Renu, soccer player, Yuwa

[Microsoft.com/inculture](https://microsoft.com/inculture)



# Personal

## Good stories are personal

The best stories to tell may not be your own. But to tell them well, they must resonate with you.

Try to put yourself in the shoes of others. Embed. Be mindful of cultural differences.

Employ empathy.

# Platform

## Good stories are particular about platform

Consider how and where the story will appear.

Get creative. Experiment. The best platform might be digital, or it might be tangible. Or, it might be both.

How you show up is part of the story, too. The medium is also the message.





Be wary of these Ps

## Products and Processes

While often part of the stories  
we tell, products and processes  
should be the supporting cast.



Our story

What makes Microsoft  
storytelling unique

3

So, what is our story?

Simply put,  
it's **our mission**

This is the  
foundational piece

To empower  
every person  
and every  
organization  
on the planet  
to achieve  
more

Consider the notion  
of “**on the planet**” —  
not just talking about  
Redmond, the US,  
or the Western World,  
but everywhere

That gives us a lot of flexibility  
of what examples we can share —  
while pushing us to look for  
diversity to highlight our mission  
in action.

And sets the stage for a rich  
opportunity for telling impactful  
stories.

## Three principles essential in the stories we tell

44

### Real people

We don't make technology for technology's sake. We make tech to augment people's abilities.

### Better together

We believe people help each other thrive. We believe creativity is collaboration. And collaboration is an essential engine of innovation.

### On a journey

These stories are not static.  
They have...

Our story 45

Ups

&

Downs

An open book with two teal-colored pages. The word "Tension" is printed across the center of the pages in a large, white, 3D sans-serif font. The letters have a slight shadow and depth, making them appear to float above the pages. The book is set against a light gray background.

Tension





*Transformation*

Occ

me ut

e or

ut

cor

me

Though not always  
in the same order



Things to remember

Keep these in mind as  
you craft a story

4

# Audience

Almost as important  
as what you say, is **who**  
you're talking with

What does your audience care  
about — what stories will resonate?

Why should they care?

What is your goal?

Is it to entertain, inspire?

Influence?

Is there another call to action?

# Be curious

And when we say  
**curious** we mean  
relentlessly curious

Good storytelling is not  
about you.

Finding the best stories relies  
on asking the right questions,  
then getting out of the way.

Listen.

Be flexible.

# Have heart

## Good stories move people

Emotional connection is an essential piece of the magic, the human connection.

Good stories sometimes involve risk.

Don't be afraid to be vulnerable.



So, remember the **Five Ps**

**Practice** the qualities  
of good storytellers

Bring to life the **principles**  
of Microsoft storytelling

Make way for the **magic**

Storytelling is as much art, as it is science and practice. While the digital age has transformed the way we can experience information and content, the reason behind telling stories is the same. The impact is real. Limitless. And lasting.

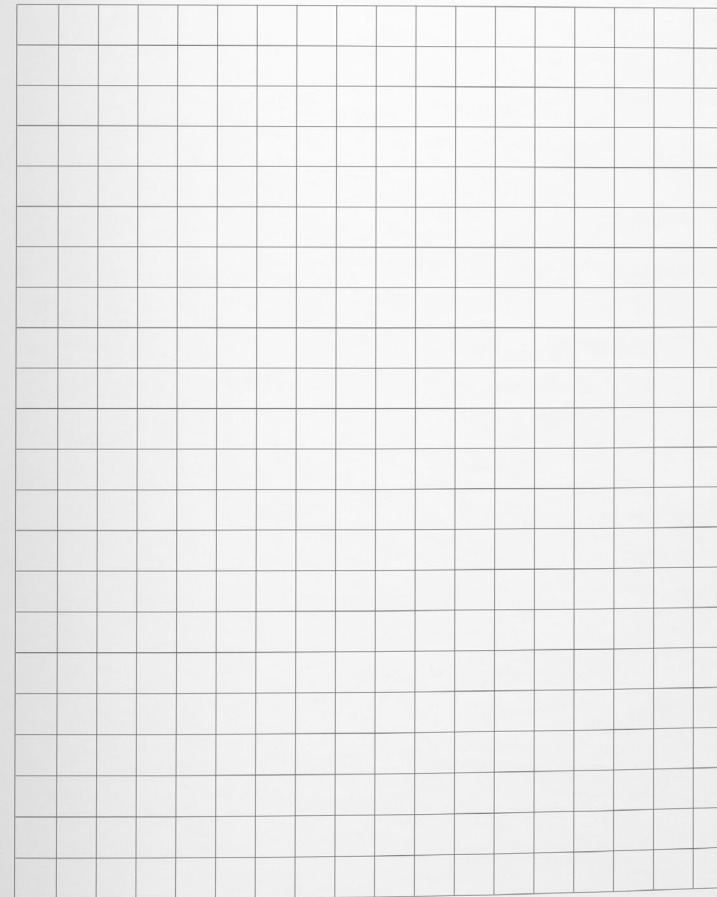
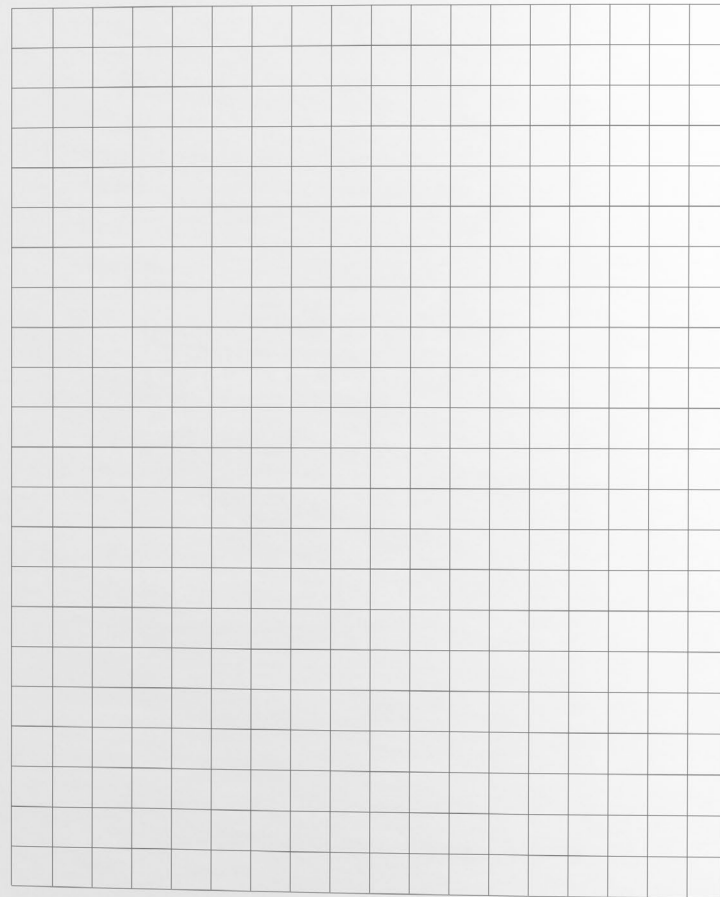
Through the craft of storytelling, we aim to create meaningful connections and help our audiences make sense of themselves, the world around them and, of course, the technology we create.

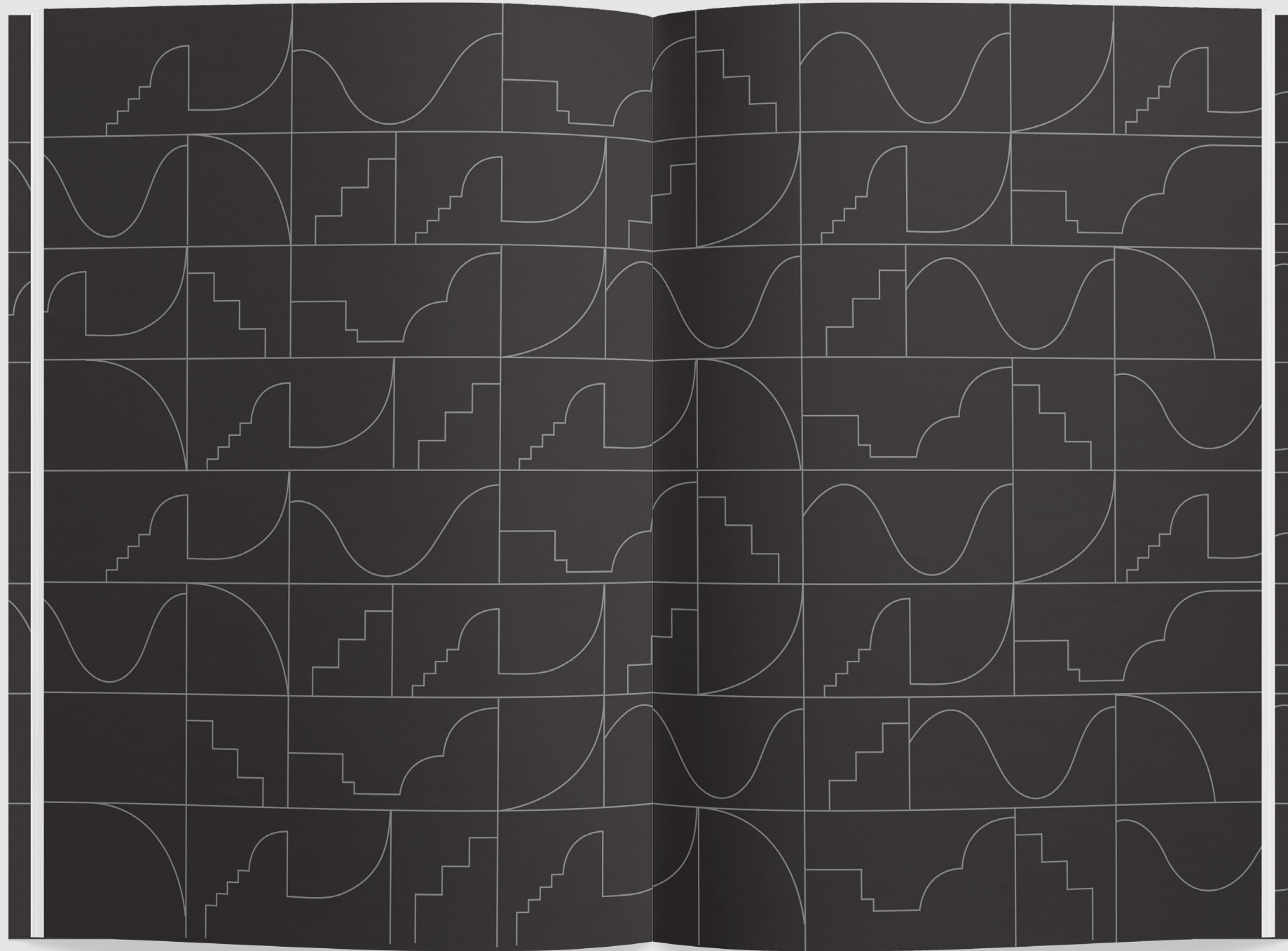
What's your story?

Lined writing area on page 66.

Lined writing area on page 67.

Draw your own story arc.  
What does your **journey** look like?







[aka.ms/storytelling](https://aka.ms/storytelling)