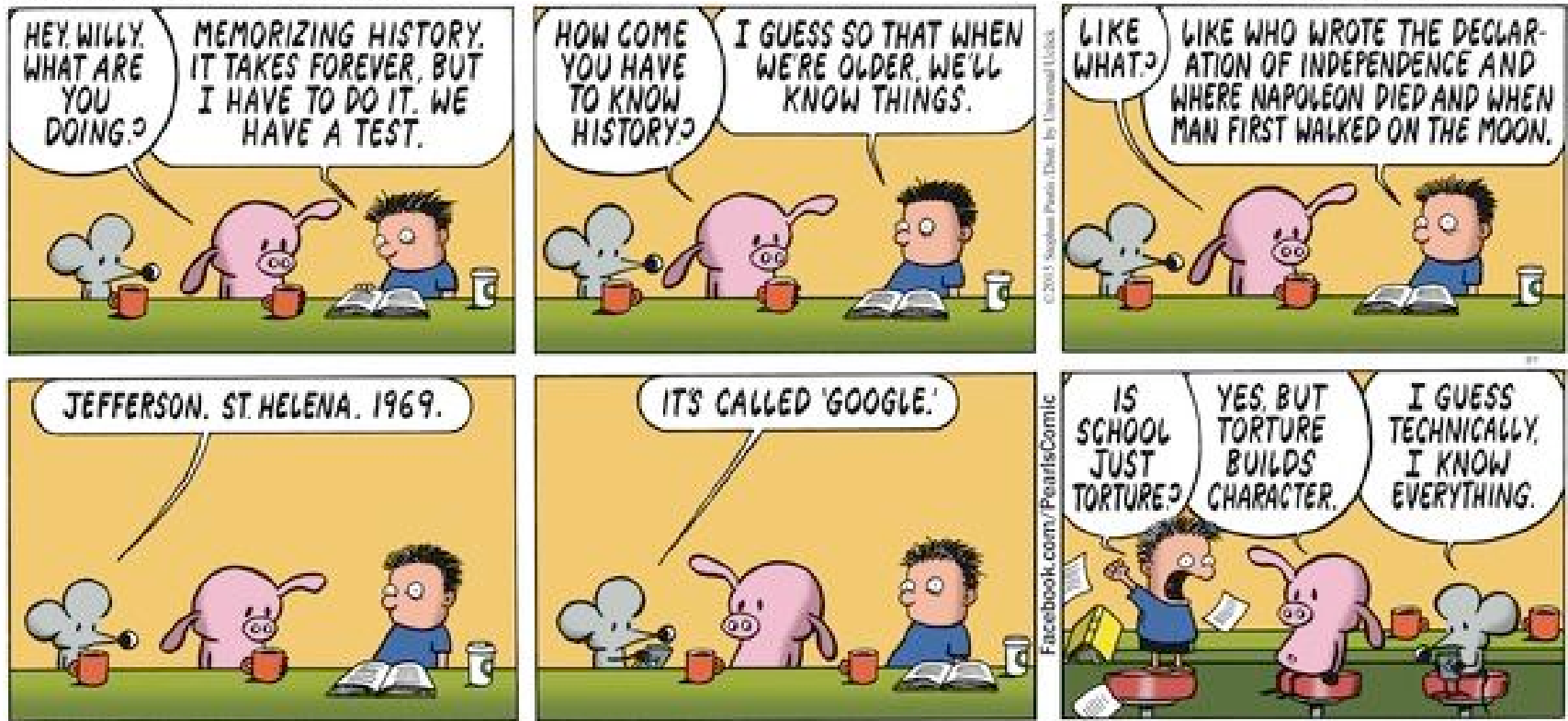


## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

BY STEPHAN PASTIS

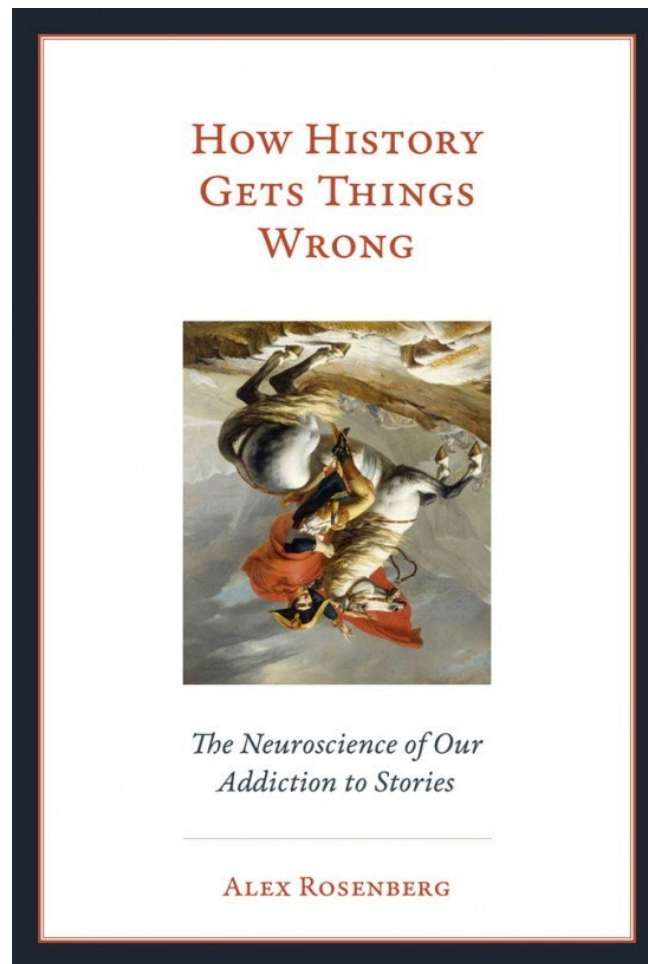


# What Did You Learn in School Yesterday – 4



# Course schedule

Date	Topics
3/29	Introduction and America's first century
4/5	The 20 <sup>th</sup> Century looks back
4/12	Wars, Hot and Cold
4/26	<b>The rebels take hold; traditionalist fight back: Young radical historians and the restoration of the past</b>
5/3	Contemporary Trends The Future of History



A disruptive teaser

Via [A Crisis of Cognition](#) by Jeff Jarvis



“students long remember how they felt in a classroom rather than what they learned “

# How important are textbooks anyway?

- Most textbooks don't cite sources.
  - Reviewers, teachers, and students cannot easily verify materials
  - Teaching historical methods and tools becomes more difficult
- Teachers often need supplemental materials
- National Research Council. 2005. *How Students Learn: History in the Classroom*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.17226/11100>.



**Table 6.4**

Percentage of students and average U.S. history scale scores by students' reports on frequency of classroom activities at grade 12: 1994 and 2001

Grade **12**


Frequency of  
Twelfth-Grade  
Classroom Activities

	1994	2001
<i>Read material from a textbook</i>		
About every day	40 289	44 * 290
Once or twice a week	40 289	38 289
Once or twice a month	9 284	8 283
A few times a year	6 278	6 276
Never	6 268	5 * 270
<i>Read extra material not in the regular textbook</i>		
About every day	9 288	10 290
Once or twice a week	30 289	31 291
Once or twice a month	24 291	25 290
A few times a year	18 288	17 289
Never	18 274	17 276

Students who reported never reading extra material scored lowest.

Reading a textbook helps, somewhat

**The Nation's Report Card, U.S. History 2001** (Test scale: 0-500)



WHAT is remarkable about the American-history texts of the late sixties and early seventies compared with those of the past is the sense of uncertainty they show.

We no longer know what we thought we knew

Rewriting American History By [Frances FitzGerald](#)  
*The New Yorker*, February 25, 1979

What has made *Rise of the American Nation* such a successful book? ... [T]he copyright information on the frontispiece of the book provides one important clue. First published in 1950, the book seems to have weathered the Cold War years without any major changes. Then it went through a rapid series of revisions with new copyrights in 1961, 1964, 1966, and 1969.... The book went through two further revisions after that, in 1972 revisions suggest that the editors and authors duly appreciated the fact that while textbook versions of historical truth are authoritative, they are also highly tentative.

## Changing both the present and the past

Downey, Matthew T. "Speaking of Textbooks: Putting Pressure on the Publishers." *The History Teacher*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1980



**Ruth E. Randall**  
State Commissioner of Education,  
Minnesota

**Austin Ranney**  
Professor of Political Science,  
University of California/Berkeley

**Diane Ravitch**  
Chairman, Educational Excellence  
Network

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State Commissioner of Education,  
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**A. James Reichley**  
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

**Werner Rogers**  
State Superintendent of Schools,  
Georgia

**Bayard Rustin**  
President, A. Philip Randolph  
Educational Fund

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Board of Education

**Samuel G. Saua**  
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**Marshall S. Smith**  
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Secondary School Principals

**Michael Timpone**  
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Columbia University

**Gerald N. Tirozzi**  
State Commissioner of Education,  
Connecticut

**Liv Ullmann**  
Actress

**Gene Upshaw**  
President, National Football League  
Players Association, AFL-CIO

**Patrick Welsh**  
Teacher, Author *Tales Out of School*

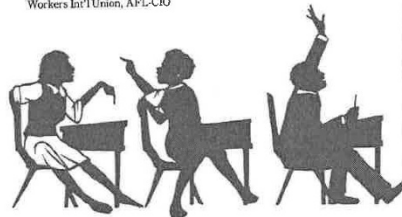
**Elie Wiesel**  
Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the  
Humanities, Boston University

**George F. Will**  
Columnist

**Lynn R. Williams**  
International President, United  
Steel Workers of America, AFL-CIO

**William S. Woodside**  
Chairman, Executive Committee,  
Primerica Corp.

**William Wynn**  
President, United Food & Commercial  
Workers Int'l Union, AFL-CIO



\*Organizational affiliation is listed  
for identification purposes only.

# EDUCATION \* \* \* F \* O \* R \* \* \* DEMOCRACY

As the bicentennial for our Constitution approaches, we call for a special effort to raise the level of education for democratic citizenship. Given the complexities of our own society, of the rest of the world, and of the choices we confront, the need is self-evident and improvement is long past due.

As the years pass, we become an increasingly diverse people, drawn from many racial, national, linguistic, and religious origins. Our cultural heritage as Americans is as diverse as we are, with multiple sources of vitality and pride. But our political heritage is one—the vision of a common life in liberty, justice, and equality as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution two centuries ago.

To protect that vision, Thomas Jefferson prescribed a general education not just for the few but for all citizens, “to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom.” A generation later, Alexis de Tocqueville reminded us that our first duty was to “educate democracy.” He believed that all politics were but the playing out of the “notions and sentiments dominant in people.” These, he said, are the “real causes of all the rest.” Ideas—good and bad—have their consequences in every sphere of a nation’s life.

We cite de Tocqueville’s appeal with a sense of urgency, for we fear that many young Americans are growing up without the education needed to develop a solid commitment to those “notions and sentiments” essential to a democratic form of government. Although all the institutions that shape our private and public lives—family, church, school, government, media—share the responsibility for encouraging democratic values in our children, our focus here is on the nation’s schools and their teaching of the social studies and humanities.

In singling out the schools, we do not suggest that there was ever a golden age of education for citizenship, somehow lost in

## Education for Democracy 1987

“We regard the study of history as the chief subject in education for democracy, much as Jefferson and other founders of the United States did two centuries ago.”

# Lynne Cheney and Eric Foner





Students engaged in activities of the kinds just considered will draw upon skills in the following five interconnected dimensions of historical thinking:

1. Chronological Thinking
2. Historical Comprehension
3. Historical Analysis and Interpretation
4. Historical Research Capabilities
5. Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

“What went wrong? One member of the National Council for History Standards (the group that oversaw the drafting of the standards) says that the 1992 presidential election unleashed the forces of political correctness.”

- Lynne Cheney, [WSJ](#), October 24, 1994

## How shall we teach?

**National Standards for History Basic Edition, 1996, Public History Initiative (PHI) of the UCLA Department of History**



Howard Zinn continues to have an impact

**How 'New Left' Orthodoxy Is Failing a New Generation of History Students**, Quillette, March 28, 2019

*I believe a dollar invested in the development of the mind of the white child and the cultivation of the white man and women, is the best investment the State ever made. On the other hand, I believe every dollar invested for negro education under our present school system is an indefensible and unwarranted prodigality of cash.*

*I am more interested in the salvation of men. ... If the convict be a low-bred, vulgar creature ... so much greater the necessity that he should be given kindly treatment, a decent bed to sleep on, and sanitary surroundings in the penitentiary. He is there to be improved and not degraded.<sup>1</sup>*

## Chapter Objective

Write an essay about the so-called “progressive rednecks” in Mississippi at the turn of the century. Explain some of the positive accomplishments as well as some negative legacies of the key political leaders in this era.

## Making sense of a senseless past

**Busbee, Westley F., Jr.. Mississippi : A History, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2014.**



# The Textbook Presidency Theory

- State history books have been mostly offered to middle-school students.
  - ... many textbook researchers tend to believe that the textbook information concerning the topic of their study is being presented in a way that serves the purposes of those who believe in the “dominant ideologies.”
  - textbook interpretations offer idealized and incorrect images about the men who held the office, as well as the importance of the office itself -
- Roberts, Scott. (2009). The Textbook Presidency Theory and its Relationship to the Portrayals of 20th and 21st Century Presidents Found in the Middle Level State History Textbooks of.... (Ph.D. thesis)



# Cronin's constructs of the textbook presidency

1. That the President is the strategic catalyst in the American political system and the central figure in the international system as well.
2. That only the President is or can be the genuine architect of United States Public Policy and only he, by attacking problems frontally and aggressively, and interpreting his power expansively, can be the engine of change to move the nation forward.
3. That the President must be the nation's personal and moral leader; by symbolizing the past and future greatness of America and radiating inspirational confidence, a President can pull the nation together while directing us toward the fulfillment of the American Dream.

# How important is the presidency?

State	Total Mentions	Construct 1 (Strategic catalyst)	Construct 2 (Genuine architect)	Construct 3 (Moral leader)
Arkansas	293	24%	23%	24%
California	64	17%	17%	28%
Connecticut	13	<b>46%</b>	<b>46%</b>	46%
Georgia	885	21%	17%	12%
Illinois	27	37%	33%	15%
Iowa	37	14%	11%	3%
Massachusetts	52	4%	4%	6%
Missouri	213	14%	11%	10%
Nebraska	1	0%	0%	<b>100%</b>
New York	65	14%	13%	7%
Ohio	151	12%	11%	12%
Texas	888	15%	13%	8%
Vermont	44	5%	5%	0%
Virginia	68	47%	26%	25%

# “Mentioning”

- By including special sections that *mention* contributions of certain groups, textbook authors ensure that those groups will be seen as *others*.

# Slavery and textbooks

- Slavery is rarely explored in depth, including its impact on politics, education, economy, and public morality.
- Depiction tends to be matter-of-fact, along with a few highlighted African-American accomplishments
- Teaching requires supplemental material, such as the PBS series Africans in America (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/>)
- ‘New Views of Slavery: Using Recent Historical Work to Promote Critical Thinking about the "Peculiar Institution"' – Russell Olwell

The anti-Israel bias is usually a result of factual inaccuracy, oversimplification, omission and distortion. Common errors include getting dates of events wrong, blaming Israel for wars that were a result of Arab provocation, perpetuating the myth of Islamic tolerance of Jews, minimizing the Jewish aspect of the Holocaust, apologizing for Arab autocrats, refusing to label violence against civilians as terrorism and suggesting that Israel is the obstacle to peace.

## Jewish perspective on American History textbooks

### “Rewriting History in Textbooks”

**TABLE II**  
**Percentages of Texts' Copy and Visuals**  
**Incorporating Women**

<b>First Author and Title of Text</b>	<b>Percentage of Copy Devoted to Women</b>	<b>Percentage of Visuals Depicting Women</b>
Abramowitz, <i>American History</i>	7.5	43
Bass, <i>Our American Heritage</i>	3.7	35
Boorstin, <i>A History of the United States</i>	2.7	43
Bragdon, <i>History of a Free People</i>	4.8	30
Jordan, <i>The Americans</i>	4.8	38
Linden, <i>A History of Our American Republic</i>	3.6	58
Risjord, <i>People and Our Country</i>	4.9	50
Schwartz, <i>The New Exploring Our Nation's History</i>	1.6	37
Shenton, <i>These United States</i>	2.6	48
Smith, <i>The American Dream</i>	*7.5	55
Todd, <i>Rise of the American Nation</i>	4.1	38
Ver Steeg, <i>A People and a Nation</i>	1.7	30

## Changes to visuals instead of improvements to content

**“Integrating Women's History: The Case of United States History High School Textbooks” – Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault**



# Science and Technology

- Imbalance – facts without impact or impact without facts
- Little content about scientific racism
- “The textbooks' coverage of military technology and its relationship to the civilian sector is poor.”
- “Science and Technology in U. S. History Textbooks: What's There: And What Ought to Be There” – J. L. Heilbron and Daniel J. Kevles

I was perplexed about why it was appropriate to read the protest writings of Thomas Jefferson, but not the protest writings of the Native leader Black Hawk.

Alabama history teacher Prentice T. Chandler

The war in the classroom is local

A Teacher's Struggle to Include "Other" Voices in History, 2006

# What's popular

American Textbook Council: Widely Adopted History Textbooks

Author	Title	Publisher
Brinkley	Unfinished Nation	McGraw Hill
Divine	America Past and Present	Prentice Hall
Faragher	Out of Many	Prentice Hall
Henretta	America's History	Bedford/Macmillan
Kennedy	The American Pageant	Houghton Mifflin/Cengage
Norton	A People and a Nation	Houghton Mifflin/Cengage
Tindall	America: A Narrative History	Norton

“Textbook choice for teachers has in recent decades shrunk to almost nothing. Text-light picture books and easy readers are now almost universal; content distinctions between books are minor, and at the K-6 level, almost indistinguishable.”

The three main conclusions of this study of leading elementary- and secondary-level history textbooks are that today: (1) Gutted textbooks and the passing of close reading as a central learning activity pose profound challenges to literacy and habits of thought. (2) Editorial confusion reigns in the subject of history. Content is thinner and thinner, and what there is, increasingly deformed by identity politics and group pieties. (3) Publishers should be producing cheaper books that are more text-centered, simpler in design, and more honest in content.

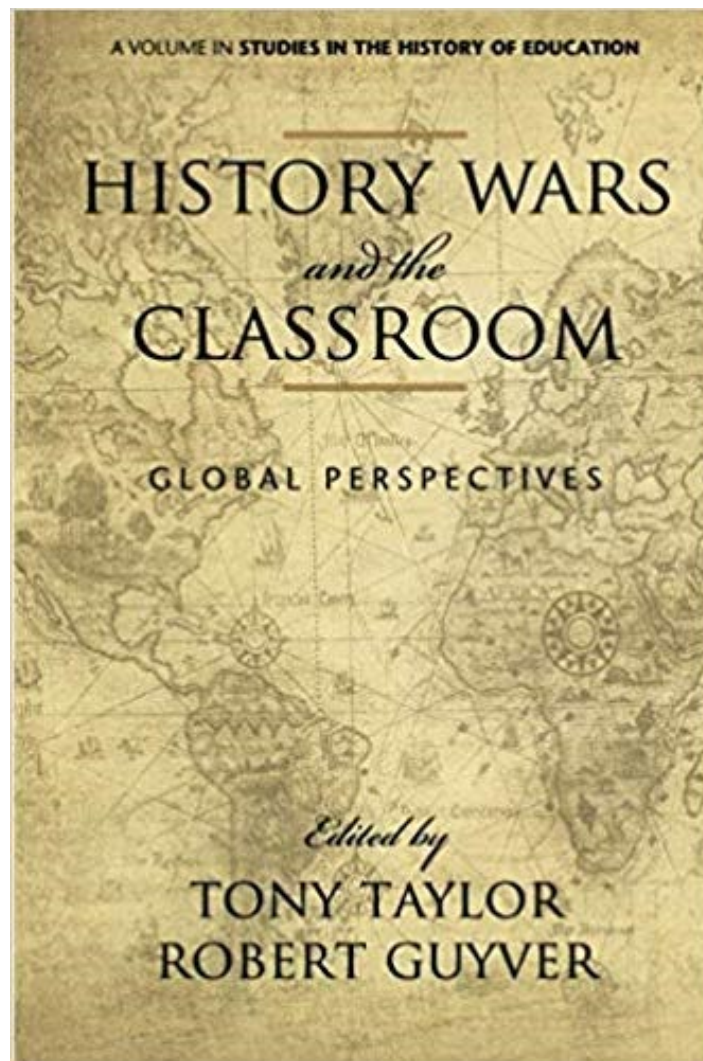
“A picture is not worth a thousand words.”

History textbooks at the new century – Gilbert T. Sewall,  
American Textbook Council, 2000



# Standards vs. Frameworks

- On October 1, 1998, California adopted The History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools.
  - Standards not updated: “Although everybody seems to agree that our content standards need to be updated, neither the State Board of Education (SBE) or the California Department of Education (CDE) have the authority to update them.” – Nancy McTygue, CHSSP Executive Director
  - New Framework starting in September, 2019



Not just American and not just American history



Historians, however, through their idolization of written sources, have commonly allowed themselves to wallow in detail, while refusing to think about the larger patterns of the past which cannot be discovered by consulting documentary sources.

William H. McNeill

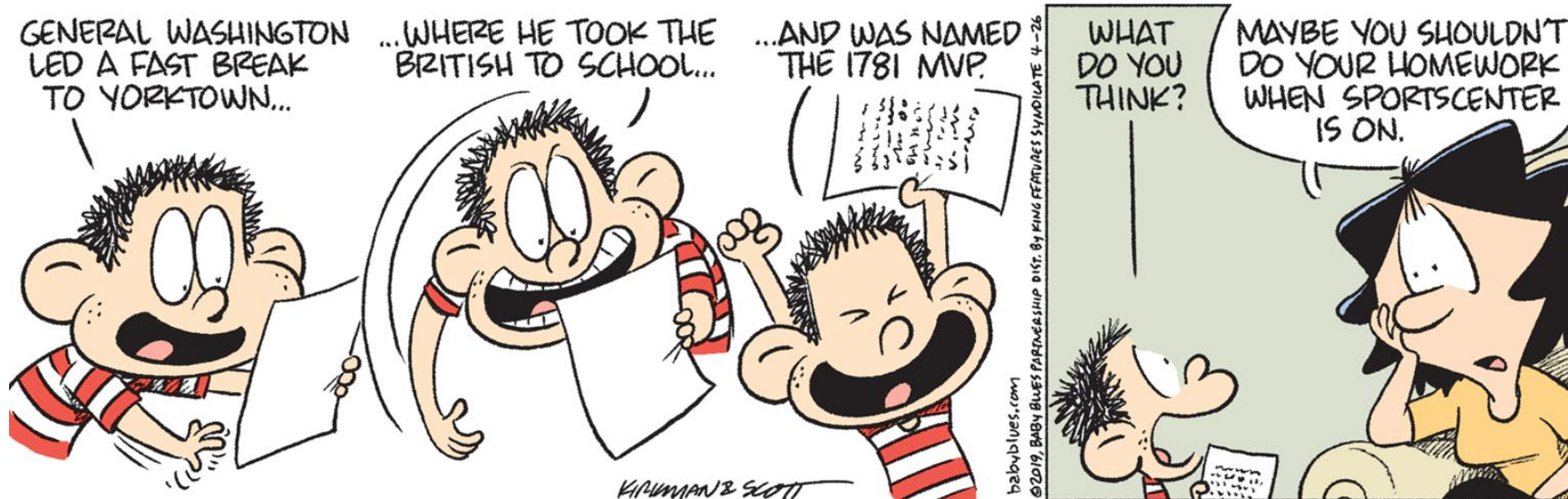
## Myth-making and myth-breaking

### The Care and Repair of Public Myth

...researchers might enhance teachers' appreciation of students' historical thinking by reporting their results in a more accessible and classroom-relevant manner; although student cognition has been an important area of investigation, most research is geared toward an audience of other researchers, and it can be difficult for teachers to see the relevance of such studies for their own work.

## The ideological wars are not helping education

History Wars and The Classroom : Global Perspectives, edited by Tony Taylor, and Robert Guyver, Information Age Publishing, Incorporated, 2014.



Next week:  
Where we are and where we're heading