Formalizing Education in the U.S.
With the end of the American Revolution, Benjamin Franklin and other Founding Fathers advocate for an education system that will develop moral, informed and patriotic citizens.

Late 40's - early 50's

Cold War Fears
Progressive education and social studies are condemned as communist by historians such as Arthur Bestor.

Indian Education for All Act
This Montana law aims to implement a 1972 requirement that schools recognize and preserve the unique cultural heritage of American Indians; funding isn’t allocated until 2005.

Early 60's

American Political Science Association and American Sociological Association
Social scientists form these organizations in order to foster independence from historians.

Late 60's

Social studies are condemned as communist by historians such as Arthur Bestor.

National Council for Social Studies
The NCSS is created to unite and offer support to social studies educators.

No Child Left Behind
Congress passes this law with bipartisan support. Within five years, a survey of 1278 districts finds that 89% of respondents believe that the law has decreased the amount of time spent on social studies instruction.

Common Core State Standards
While this initiative does not include social studies content standards, it does specify social studies literacy standards.

C3 Framework
Over 20 states and 8 national organizations collaborate on a framework for upgrading social studies standards, driving interdisciplinary instruction.

Late 70's

History Mandate
The National Humanities Commission finds history education to be inadequate, inappropriate, and makes specific recommendations regarding both American and world history.

National Standards for History
The controversial set of curriculum guidelines is charged with being too politically correct by conservatives.

1994

Indigenous History Program
The federal government establishes an indigenous history program.

African American History
Philadelphia becomes the first school district requiring a class in African American history for high school graduation.

Late 80's

New Social Studies Movement
This curriculum reform movement fueled by government funding aims to challenge propaganda in social studies and establish an academic standard in teaching based on scientific inquiry.

1999

Man: A Course of Study
This spiral curriculum distributed by the National Science Foundation is scrutinized for promoting un-American ideas, and contributes to distrust of government-funded educational projects.

Late 90's

History Revival
The conservative Bradley Commission finds history education in the U.S. inadequate, and makes specific recommendations regarding both American and world history.

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Graduation Requirements
In 2012, only two states require students to pass a social studies course as a condition of high school graduation. By 2018, that number grows to 19.

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