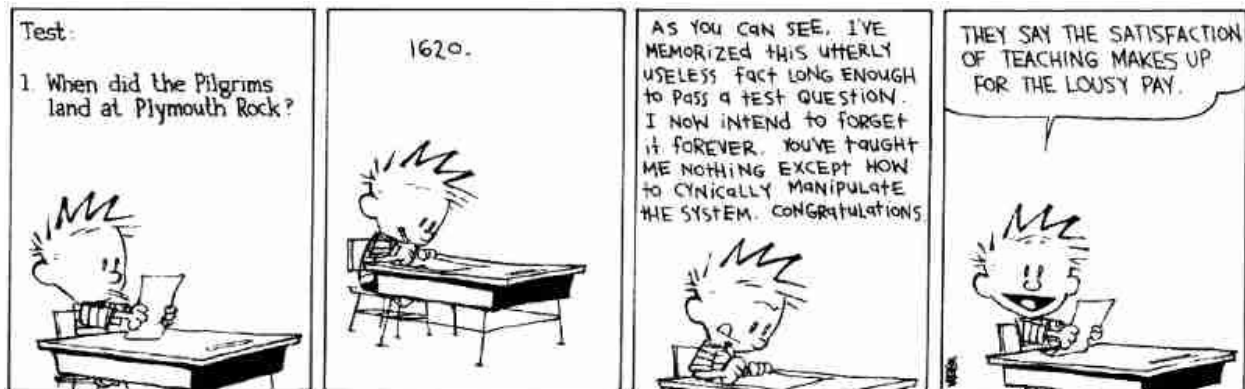


## LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

### I. A New Approach to History

#### A. What is history?

1. The modern or conventional view is that history is “the study of the past.” No wonder most people don’t care about it. *We don’t live in the past!*
2. This unfortunately prevalent view of history leaves people feeling that history is a subject that just does not matter when it comes to “real life.” Once young people get out on their own and can choose for themselves, the vast majority of them simply give up on studying *the past*. Understandably, they want to “get busy living” in *the present*.
3. History is, however, a much more valuable subject than the usual approach to the subject allows us to see. The ancient Greeks invented it because they felt a desperate need to better understand the world they lived in. If we approach the subject that way, it can give us what Thomas Jefferson called “that knowledge...most useful to us.” (History can be the MVS—the *Most Valuable Subject!*)



This *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strip perfectly captures the “dead end” that is the “study of the past.” What we really need is to learn about *the World We Live in (tWWLi)*.

4. The goal of *History At Our House* is to provide a completely different kind of experience for you as a student of history. The definition of history used in this program is:
 

**“History is the revelation and explanation of the world we live in.”**

  - a) The first part of this definition is crucial. All “students” young and old need the world *revealed* to them beyond what they experience on a daily basis. There *is* a wider context that affects us all, whether we know it or not—and we *do* need to know it!
  - b) The second component—explanation—is also key. Why is the world the way that it is? *Only* history can answer in the sense that the world did not *become* what it is this instant. It became what it is *in the past*. The proper goal of history is thus to uncover the events that shaped the world into what it is—so that we can make sense of the world we see around us.