



## The Origins and Growth of Studies Weekly

### An Educational Idea Takes Shape (1984)

Studies Weekly traces its origins to educator Paul David Thompson, a former classroom teacher and graphic designer who recognized a gap in available instructional materials. In 1984, while preparing to teach 4th-grade Utah history, Paul observed that no publisher had invested in creating a state-specific, affordable, and engaging curriculum for Utah classrooms. Inspired by the weekly-format pedagogy of *Weekly Reader* — a publication many educators and students fondly remembered — he developed Utah Studies Weekly, a teacher-centered, newspaper-style approach designed to meet real classroom needs.

The guiding principles were simple but powerful: alignment to standards, affordability, and usability for teachers and students. This instructional model became the foundation of what would later grow into Studies Weekly.

### From a Regional Model to a Family of Publications

As the success of Utah Studies Weekly became clear, additional Studies Weekly publications were developed to serve other states. Over time, six independently owned and operated sister companies emerged, each publishing state-specific Studies Weekly curricula under Paul Thompson's leadership. These companies shared a common instructional philosophy while operating with separate ownership and financing structures.

This period was marked by experimentation, close collaboration with educators, and ongoing refinement of the weekly curriculum model across diverse state contexts.

### Enterprise Formation and National Expansion

Ed Rickers founded Studies Weekly, Inc. as a unified national educational publishing enterprise, building on the original instructional model created by Paul Thompson. Beginning in the late-1990s, Ed provided the leadership, capital investment, and organizational structure necessary to scale the model beyond its regional roots.

Over time, Studies Weekly, Inc. consolidated the sister companies, expanded into additional states, and invested heavily in standards alignment, editorial rigor, and production capacity. This transformation shifted Studies Weekly from a collection of regional publications into a nationally recognized curriculum provider.

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## Scaling Impact and Innovation

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, Studies Weekly expanded its reach and scope:

- Curriculum offerings grew to include social studies in more states and science
- Publications were aligned to state and national standards across multiple grade levels
- Print curriculum was paired with fully aligned digital editions, ensuring consistency across formats
- Online learning tools were developed to support literacy, formative assessment, and student engagement

Over multiple decades, Studies Weekly curriculum was officially adopted in many states and by more than half of U.S. school districts, cumulatively serving more than 45 million students.

## Respecting a Shared Educational Lineage

The growth of Studies Weekly occurred alongside broader changes in educational publishing. The company has long acknowledged its intellectual lineage and respect for *Weekly Reader*, whose weekly-format approach inspired generations of educators. Studies Weekly's expansion was never intended to displace that legacy, but rather to extend and adapt it to a new era of standards-based education and state-specific curriculum needs.

## Continuing the Mission Today

Today, Studies Weekly continues to serve educators and students through curriculum designed to be accessible, engaging, and grounded in classroom realities. The company's leadership, staff, and partners remain committed to supporting teachers, honoring the profession, and ensuring that curriculum evolves in response to educational research, policy, and practice.

This history reflects a shared journey — from a single teacher's insight — to a national educational enterprise built on collaboration, innovation, and a sustained commitment to learning.

