Materials for Greene and the Decision to Lay Siege

1. The Siege of Star Fort

This passage is the first material that the students are to read and serves as one of the two descriptions of the decision to lay siege to the fort.

*At his first sight of Star Fort, dark, sullen and forbidding, Nathanael Greene became as excited as his troops. After he had seen that they were suitably encamped, had eaten and were preparing for the night, he decided to reconnoiter the enemy’s position. Accompanied by Colonel Kosciusko, Major Pendleton and an escort of dragoons, he set out in late afternoon to ride around Ninety Six.*

*After returning… Greene reflected long and seriously upon a strategy for capturing Ninety Six. As a master of both strategy and tactics, he instinctively knew that the tactics for reducing the post were simple. He could cut off the water supply; or he could storm and overwhelm Star Fort. The general was also aware that each task would be Herculean.*

*Soon after daybreak on the morning of May 23* [1781]*, General Greene continued his inspection of Ninety Six. Through his field glasses he studied Star Fort, and scanned the nearest of what Light Horse Harry called the “Sixteen salient and re-entering angles.” Greene surveyed the stockade, the fortified jail, and the redoubts and blockhouses, then examined the fosse and the abbatis. As he scanned the post he realized that Cruger’s position was almost impregnable.*

*After deep consideration, Greene decided upon a regular siege. As a keen strategist he knew, however, that the success of a siege would depend upon several things: first, the valor that would animate the defenders: second, the amount of food that Curger had been able to gather and store in the village: and third, the time necessary for Balfour and Rawdon to organize and dispatch an army to the relief of Ninety Six.*

Robert Bass, *Ninety Six: The Struggle for the South Carolina Back Country* (Lexington, South Carolina: Sandlapper Store, 1978), 386-387.

2. Comparison Sheet for The Siege of Star Fort

This sheet is designed for students to question the reading passage and build an understanding of how the text is structured and the author uses different vocabulary to convey meaning.

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| **The Siege of Star Fort** |
| **Purpose**  **Why did the author write this piece?** |
| **Vocabulary**  **What kinds of vocabulary words did the author use?** |
| **Structure**  **How is the piece organized?** |

3. Excerpt from *South Carolina and the American Revolution: A Battlefield History*

This passage is the second piece of historical material that the students are to read and serves as one of the two descriptions of the decision to lay siege to the fort.

*A great Irony for Greene – given the way his effort against Ninety Six would turn out – was that Lord Rawdon had actually sent word to Cruger to abandon the fort and fall back to Augusta. But the Americans had intercepted the messenger; Cruger never got the word. He decided to fight, doing everything in his power to improve the position until the Americans arrived to begin their siege.*

*Greene’s army amounted to just under a thousand men… This force was nearly twice as large as Cruger’s, but hardly sufficient to undertake full-scale siege operations against such excellent fortifications. Of great benefit to Greene was that his staff included Thaddeus Kosciusko, the Polish engineer serving with the Americans who had, five years before, designed the defenses which stopped Burgoyne’s offensive of 1777* [Saratoga], *as well as the defenses that guarded the Hudson River at West Point.*

*Kosciusko recommended to Greene an approach that would maximize the Americans’ limited numbers by concentrating on the Star Redoubt. Greene accepted his recommendation although this would mean beginning at the enemy’s strongest point.*

John Gordon, *South Carolina and the American Revolution: A Battlefield History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 156-157.

4. Comparison Sheet for Siege Operations at Ninety Six

This sheet is designed for students to question the reading passage and build an understanding of how the text is structured and the author uses different vocabulary to convey meaning.

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| **Siege Operations at Ninety Six** |
| **Purpose**  **Why did the author write this piece?** |
| **Vocabulary**  **What kinds of vocabulary words did the author use?** |
| **Structure**  **How is the piece organized?** |