**Useful Sentence Patterns for Past Events**

The following sentence patterns are useful for commenting about things that happened in the past. Try to use some of these in your presentation.

* Things in angle brackets <like this> are explanations of what goes at that place in the sentence.
* Things in square brackets [like this] are optional and may be nested [like [this]].
* Note the form of the verbs in the sentences, including those in angle brackets. Different verb forms and tenses are indicated by “do”, “did”, “done”, “doing”, etc.
1. As in <some previous time>, <something was done>.

**As in 1993, studies recommending computerized coordination of traffic lights were ignored.**

1. As in <some previous time>, <somebody did something>.

**As in early 1993, people tended to ignore inconvenient traffic regulations.**

1. Because they <did something>, <the things represented by “they”> <had some effect>.

**Because they disobeyed traffic laws, taxi drivers caused many traffic jams.**

1. By <[month [day],] year>, <somebody> had <done something>.

**By January 1992, the traffic commission had realized there was a serious problem and started to investigate possible solutions.**

1. By <[month [day],] year>, <somebody> was <doing something> [in order to <do something else>].

**By 1994, traffic police were working overtime in order to control the situation.**

1. By <[month [day],] year>, the worst of the <situation or condition> was over.

**By February 14, 1995, the worst of the road construction delays were over.**

1. Compared to <one thing>, <another thing> was <different in some way>.

**Compared to Shenzhen’s situation, traffic flow in Hong Kong was much more efficient and the commission wanted to determine the reasons.**

1. Despite <some condition>, <something happens or happened>.

**Despite a lot of money being put into road construction, city traffic continues to slow down to a crawl in many downtown areas.**

1. During <some time period>, <somebody> continued <some process>.

**During the two-year period ending in 1994, the traffic police technology division continued its expansion and began to computerize its operations.**

1. During <some time period>, <somebody> continued to <do something>.

**During the second half of 1995, the computer center continued to upgrade its computer equipment.**

1. In <[month] year>, <something happened>.

**In January 1996 the new computer-controlled traffic lights went into operation.**

1. In fact, <information clarifying or extending the previous idea>.

**Some people thought the system would not work. In fact, at first it appeared that the problems would never be solved.**

1. In order to <do something>, <something else> had to be <done>.

**In order to get smooth traffic flow through the city core, new roads had to be constructed.**

1. In the <season> of <year>, <something happened>.

**In the spring of 1996, people realized that the system would be adequate for only a few more years.**

1. Like <one thing>, <another thing> <had some characteristic>.

**Like Shenzhen, Hong Kong found that it had to look to modern technology for solutions to the traffic snarl.**

1. Not only <one thing/reason/activity>, but [also] <another thing/reason/activity>...

**Not only business interests, but also emergency services were affected.**

1. On <month day, year (a specific date)>, <something happened>.

**On September 12, 1993, a massive gridlock paralyzed the city.**

1. Still, <some fact that is surprising considering the information of the previous sentence>.

**Still, there seems to be little problem on the highways around the city.**

1. To <do something>, <some people> <did something else>.

**To minimize delays around road construction sites, the government required the construction companies to pay for traffic police to be at the sites and direct vehicles around the affected areas.**

1. While there was <some condition>, <some fact that you would not expect when that condition occurs>.
2. While there was <some activity>, <some fact that you would not expect if you were told about that activity>.

**While there was a slight reduction in number of accidents, the number of deaths in traffic accidents actually increased.**

1. Although <some condition>, <something that you would not expect given that condition>.

**Although the traffic density doubled in 1994, no new traffic control system was considered necessary.**

**Write some sentences about history and progress in your research area.**

**Try to use some of the sentence patterns above.**

1. Something about the situation 5 years ago.
2. A recent event or change in the past 2 years.
3. A continuing condition.
4. A comment on the current condition.