Handout on Varying Sentence Openers to Make Connections

Before writing your next document, read over these example sentence openers so that you get these constructions into your subconscious. That way, when you think about connecting your ideas, these types of connections will be waiting.

Common

Subject–Verb
Mount St. Helens erupted on May 18, 1980.

Prepositional Phrase
In minutes, the mountain emitted a cloud of hot rock and gas.

Adverb
However, debate has arisen over the source for the steam.

Dependent Clause
Although precursors for the eruption had been studied for months, the timing and power of eruption surprised many scientists.

Advanced

Infinitive Phrase
To understand the source for steam in volcanic eruptions, we have to determine how much water the magma contains.

Gerundial Phrase
Calculating the amount of ash will require many assumptions.

Participial Phase
Its slope collapsing, the mountain emitted a cloud of hot rock and gas.

Sophisticated

Dependent Clause as Subject
What actually occurred was a sudden blast that caught scientists by surprise.

Verb–Subject
Is it groundwater heated by magma or water originally dissolved in the magma itself?

Double Clause
The greater the tumescence, the more likely an eruption.

Transitional Phrases

Continuation
Also, In addition, Moreover,

Pause
In other words, Put another way, For example,

Reverse
However, On the other hand, Conversely,