

# Some notes on summer plans for linguists

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Before I list some reasonable expectations, I do want to say that if you are going to do very little work outside your personal needs/responsibilities over the summer, that is totally understandable, and you should be clear about it so you don't feel bad later. However, if you are in a position to devote some time for linguisticky things, then the following notes apply. So, here goes...

Summer is a chance to re-tool and up-skill. Here are some specific things to consider:

1. **Prepare a list of to-dos for the summer:** this could be writing a comp, working on skills...
2. **Prepare a reading list on a specific topic:** this has helped me a lot over the last few years. Typically, 25-30 papers is a very reasonable target, as it would mean about a paper every 3-4 days for three months.
3. **Work on your writing:** there are free online courses available for you to follow (example: [Coursera](#), [edX](#)), and really nice books you can read on the topic (examples: [Stephen Heard](#), [Paul Silvia](#), [Paul Silvia](#) again). A lot of graduate time is wasted on writing and re-writing based on edits. If you become a better writer, you are likely to save a TON of time. So, you should really value this.
4. **Work on programming and analysis skills:** I am hoping to run a Stats meeting group or something once a week over the summer (let's see, since I am not sure yet). You could also do a variety of free online R/Stats/Python courses on [DataCamp](#)<sup>1</sup> and [Coursera](#). You could also do online courses provided by Harvard ([link](#)). Getting some programming savvy is likely to save you a lot of time in innumerable ways in grad school and later in life.

My own experience over the last few years has been that having a clear, and most importantly **reasonable**, goal for the summer leads to a very productive break (and equally importantly, a stress-free/guilt-free break). One problem I faced early on was that I planned for too much, and this led to inevitable failure and consequent disappointment. So, be careful to be reasonable. Of all the above, the one that has made me happiest is creating a reading list and following through on it. So if you had to pick only one, then I recommend that's what it should be :). Note, I am not including necessities like comps...

If you do it right, you will have PLENTY of time to relax, and will also come back next semester refreshed and more focussed.

Finally, if any of you want to sit down and discuss your plans for the summer with me over the next few weeks, please make an appointment and we can talk about it. I really want to encourage you to develop a plan that works for you, if you can.

Hope these thoughts help.

*P.S. - Feel free to share this email with others if you think it might help them.*

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<sup>1</sup>You have free access to DataCamp courses through MSU SSDA ([go here to register](#)).