It's June. The final day of the school year arrives. Cheering students tear out of the building and never look back. The very next day, their hard-working parents, toil away at jobs, while these students sleep until noon. When they finally wake up, what do they do? They surf the internet or play hours of mind-numbing video games. Or they plop onto living room couches and view hours of mediocre television while munching unhealthy snacks. This is the unfortunate pattern of many middle school students' summer lives. They turn into couch potatoes, video-game addicts, and aimless internet surfers until July turns to August, and finally it's time for them to unplug the electronics, get out the schoolbooks, and plug in their brains again. This is just an example of why we should lengthen the school year.

It seems like every summer parents have to scrounge around and make plans to accommodate their children. Think about it, parents' work schedules typically don't change, meaning they still have to work during the week regardless if it's summer. This results in many parents paying extra for their child to go to daycares, camps, or having a nanny. If we lengthened the school year, parents would have fewer days to worry about what they'd have to do with their child.

Another reason why the school year should be lengthened is due to student memory loss during the summer. The beginning of each school year is filled with retesting and re-teaching. This is mostly due to the lack of learning and applying knowledge during the summer. Instead of reading, leaving thinking tracks, and practicing math, most students are busy playing mindless video games, watching TV, staying up late, and waking up late. Basically students are not using the summer to review or preview anything helpful for school.

So what is the United States waiting for? Do we want our students to compete internationally, or don't we? We need to tell those couch potatoes, video-game addicts, and aimless internet surfers to turn off the TVs and power down their screens. We need to get past the old-fashioned idea that kids need so much downtime. We need to add more days to the school year, to keep students focused on learning.