I'm not sure what you mean by interpreting ipDay.get(dattoString).add(ip) as ipDay.get(keys).add(values). What a line of code like ipDay.get(variable1).add(variable2) does is adds variable 2 (by calling the .add() method) to the value of variable1 in the hashmap. This works because in this case the values in your hashmaps are arraylists. If you were using a hashmap where the values were integers, you wouldn't be able to do this because you can't call .add() on an integer.

If you're having trouble writing the code, I think the best thing to do is to start by writing pseudocode. This will make sure you understand the problem and the idea of how to solve it using code. Here's an example of pseudocode:

//create a hashmap with Strings as keys and Integers as values

//for each word in the file

//if the word isn't in the hashmap

//put it in the hashmap with value of 1

//else (if word IS in the hashmap already)

//get the value of word

//add one to it

//put word and the new value in the hashmap

(Note that of course this is pseudocode for a different problem than the one you are currently working on. It's just to give you an idea of what pseudocode is.)

Then when you have come up with an algorithm, write the code based on your pseudocode. Think about how you would test this code - come up with an example of input and think about what output you would expect from it. Run your code and see if it gives you the output you would expect. If it doesn't, think about how it could have produced that input and what kinds of things could be going wrong. Often (usually?) your code won't give the right output the first time you run it, and you'll have to find the bug and fix it. So that's how I would go about writing the code. You might also find it helpful to refer back to the seven steps that are discussed earlier in the specialization.