RECOMMENDED LATEX PACKAGES[1]

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AN OPINIONATED, SINGLE PAGE GUIDE to the most useful LaTeX packages from the point of view of a graduate student in linguistics – as such, my choices are shaped by the demands of typesetting articles, handouts and presentations in my field. A little about my set-up: I edit `.tex` files in spacemacs (an `evil`-centered `emacs` distribution) using the LaTeX layer, which incorporates a number of extremely useful editing tools, including `AUCTeX` and `RefTeX`. There's a little bit of a learning curve, but I highly recommend it over dedicated LaTeX editors/IDEs.

1 General use

- `microtype` makes microtypographical adjustments. Declare this package in your preamble and forget about it.
- `TikZ` is an absolutely essential package for generating vector graphics. Many of the other packages listed here use `TikZ`.
- `todonotes` provides visually appealing to-do notes using `TikZ`. Especially useful for collaborating on a LaTeX document.
- `biblatex` handles the bibliography and citations. Use this with the `biber` backend for the more advanced features. I use the `biblatex-sp-unified` style, which is an excellent implementation of the Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics Journals.
  Alternatives: `bibtex`
- `mdframed` is a flexible package for drawing frames around text. Especially useful for handouts.

2 Linguistics

- `forest` is an extremely powerful package for drawing tree diagrams using `TikZ`. Pass the optional argument `linguistics` to use the built-in linguistics library, which includes a dedicated style for typesetting government phonology trees(!). I've also found this package handy for typesetting Hasse diagrams.
  Alternatives: `pst-jtree`, `tikz-qtree`, `qtree`
- `expex` is a full-featured package for numbered examples and glosses.

Alternatives: `philex`, `gb4e`, `linguex`

- `ot-tableau` is package for type-setting Optimality Theory tableau.
- `stmaryrd` provides the brackets used for the denotation function in formal semantics ⟦ and ⟧ (`\$llbracket` and `\$rrbracket`). The brackets are defined as delimiters, which means that `\left` and `\right` can be used to, e.g., wrap the denotation brackets around a tree typeset using `forest`!
- fontspec is a package for X∃LaTeX/LuaTeX for loading opentype fonts. As long as you have a unicode IPA font installed on your system (such as Doulos SIL), this allows you to enter IPA symbols as unicode characters directly into your document.

3 Presentations

- `beamertheme-metropolis` provides a minimalist beamer theme that makes it look less ugly. You need X∃LaTeX or LuaTeX for full functionality.
- `beamerposter` is a package for constructing posters using the beamer style operations.
  Alternatives: `tikzposter`

4 Theses

- `classicthesis` is a beautiful thesis template, but not recommended for beginners. See also `arsclassica` which makes additional typographical adjustments to the `classicthesis` base.
  Alternatives: `memoir`, `srcreprt`