

A hand holding a pen is shown writing on a document. The image is slightly blurred and has a semi-transparent text box overlaid on it. The text box contains the title and subtitle of the presentation.

College Applications

What you need to know to improve
your chances of being admitted to your
first choice school!

First Things First...

This is YOUR application. You will be the one attending the school, therefore you will be responsible for most of the work in this process.

This is a TIME-CONSUMING process. It is at least the equivalent of a 3-credit-hour class.

You will be responsible for meeting deadlines – this means you must learn the deadlines and work within them.

Deadlines, deadlines....

There will actually be several deadlines for EACH application

- You should request teacher recommendations well in advance. Think *NOW* about who you might ask in the fall.
- You must submit Secondary School Reports or Counselor Recommendations to your College Advisor at least three weeks before they are due at the school.

And yet more deadlines.

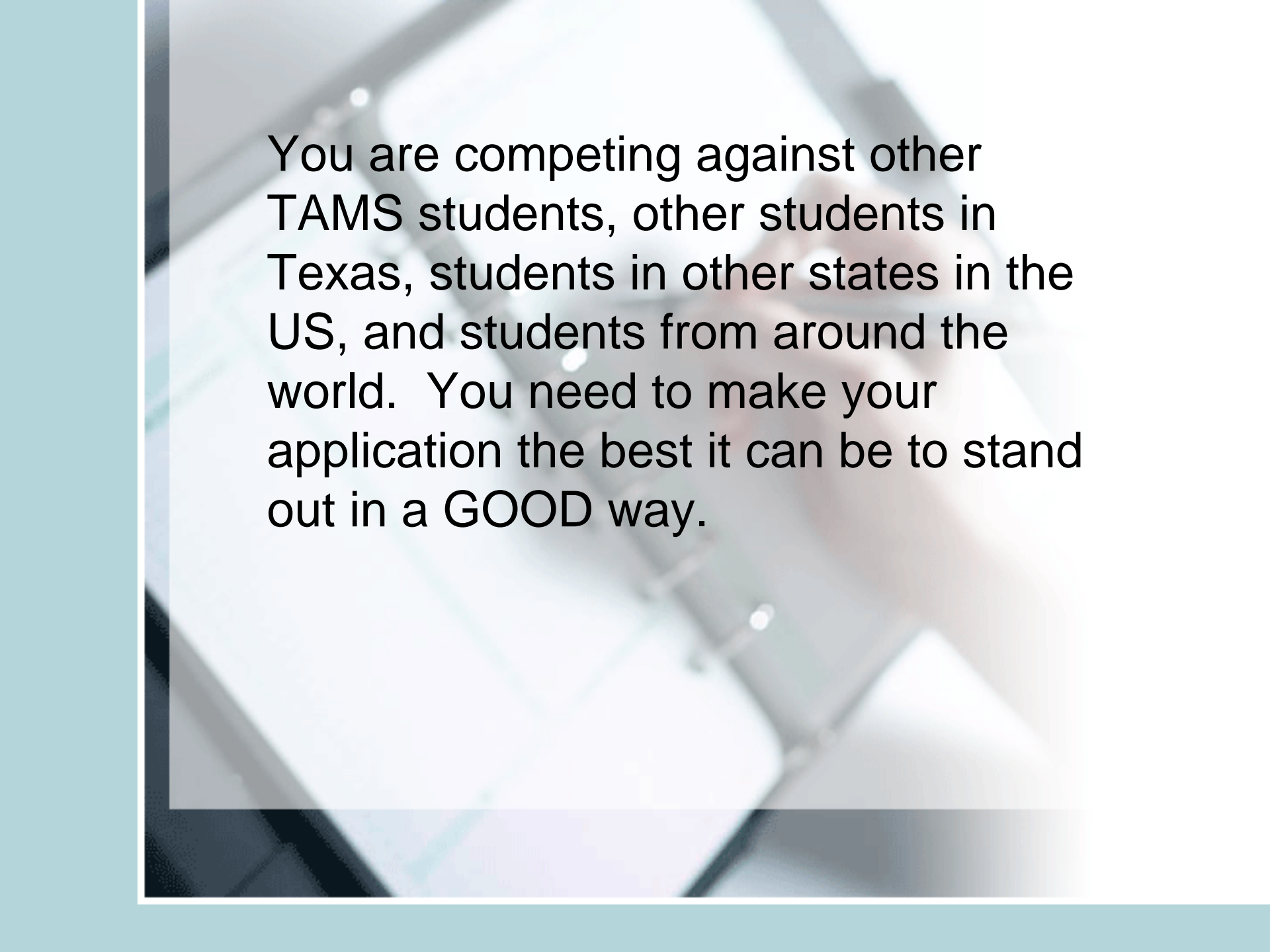
- There will be different deadlines for Financial Aid forms
- Most schools will have different deadlines for school scholarships.
- Some Honors Programs have their own deadlines.
- There are different deadlines for Early Decision, Early Action, Interim Decision, Rolling Admission, and Regular Decision.
- It is much better not to wait until the deadline!

Keep track of all of this...

School	ED/EA	Reg.	Fin. Aid	Scholarships	Housing	Honors	Others, Notes
Texas A&M	Preferred Deadline 12/1/08	Final – Rec'd by 2/1/09	FAFSA 2/1/09	Separate app. Dec 2008		Honors & Academic Scholarship Dec 2008	All deadline REC'D BY
UT Austin	Preferred 12/1/08	FINAL Rec'd By 2/1/09	FSFSA 2/1/09	Freshman Scholarships 12/1/08	ASAP after 9/1/08. Extra fee	Done through website, each has a separate form	
Top U	11/1/08	1/1/09	School form 1/1/09 FAFSA 2/15/09	Included with Fin Aid	Done after admitted	Extra page for 6 yr BA/MD	Need 2 SAT Subject tests
Dream College	11/15/08	1/1/09	School 12/1/08 FAFSA 2/1/09	Nomination required, due by 2/1/09	After admitted	Separate app, 3/1/09	Request ACT or SAT and 3 SAT subjects.

Why do I need to start now?

- This year, Duke had over 19,000 applications for only 1640 places in the freshman class. Some students who would have been admitted in the past are now being denied.
- Two years ago, applications at Baylor increased by over 35%. They are now recommending that students apply over the summer to increase their chances.

A hand holding a pen over a document, with a blurred background of a microscope. The text is overlaid on the image.

You are competing against other TAMS students, other students in Texas, students in other states in the US, and students from around the world. You need to make your application the best it can be to stand out in a GOOD way.

Essays

- Essays are often the deciding factor when 2 candidates have similar academic records.
- You can not just throw something together the night before you send your application. You need to give your essays thought, then polish and refine them.
- This is your chance to show what is special or unique about you.
- Use the “thumb” test.

Here is what UT Austin has to say...

- It would be nice (maybe) if the University of Texas were filled with heroic leaders who had all been dramatically influenced by all of their academic subjects and extracurricular activities, but it's not, and we don't expect it to be anytime soon. Instead, it is made up of a host of interesting, unique individuals who have made a wide range of contributions to their families, their schools, or their communities and attained many different kinds and levels of achievement. If we are “looking for” anything in these essays, we are looking for **YOU** – the unique individual that stands behind all those numbers and grades and test scores. These essays are an opportunity for you to introduce us to you.

don't just repeat the question, introduce your idea

illustrate your points with specific examples and interesting details

bring the reader to some conclusion; don't just repeat what you've already said

write to convey your ideas clearly and easily; don't write to "impress"

write about what's specific to you; not what you think we want to hear

express yourself; could your parents pick out your essay from a pile of 50 others?

UT Scores – out of 6

Score of 3

An essay in this category demonstrates developing competence. Such an essay may contain one or more of the following weaknesses:

- inadequate organization or development
- inappropriate or insufficient details to support ideas
- an accumulation of awkward expressions

Think about your activities

- Begin organizing your resume.
- Think about extracurricular activities, volunteer work, jobs, etc.
- Think about how much time you give to each.
- Think about which means the most to you and why.
- Think about what trends are shown.

Think about money

- There are scholarships out there, but many will require you to do extra work, write an essay, read a book, etc. Plan to leave some time for these.
- Remember that textbooks will cost you money – your books for this school year cost over \$500. Even a \$100 scholarship helps.