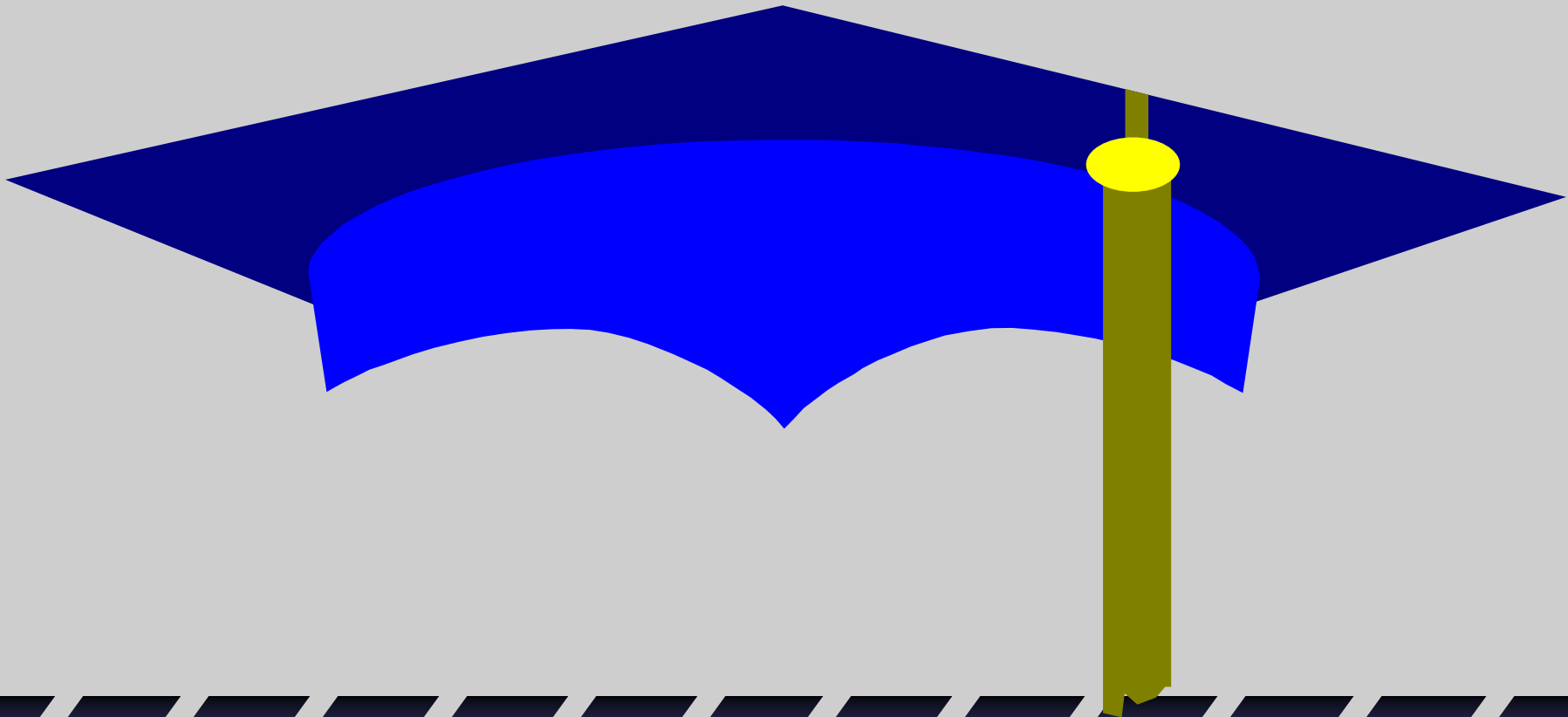


The Graduate School Process



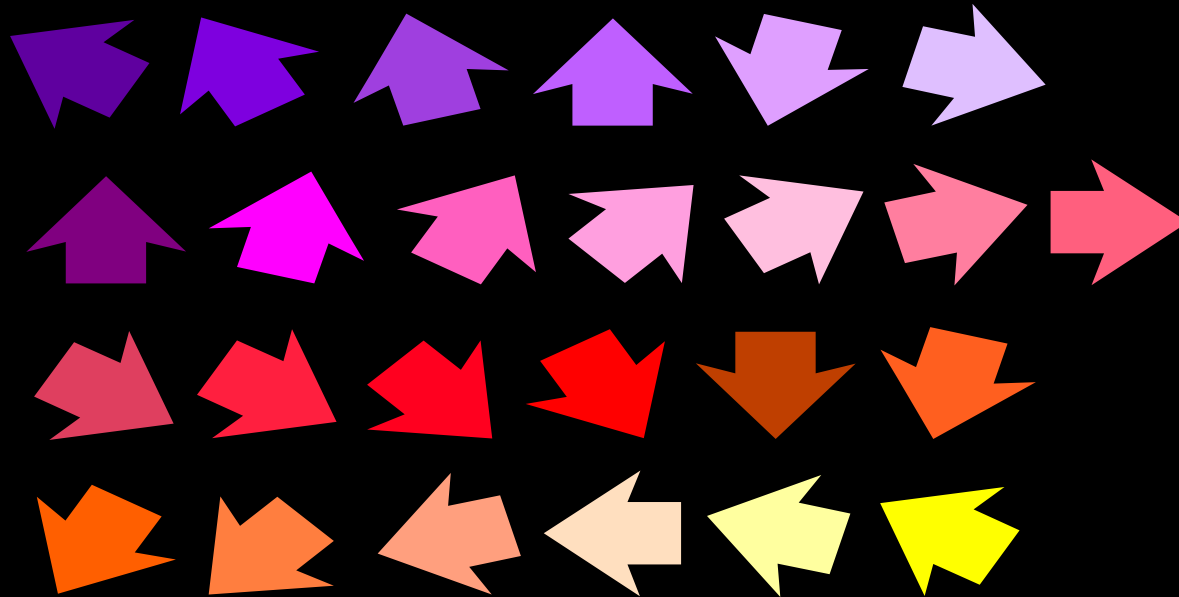
Qualities needed by Graduate Students

- u Intelligence
- u Initiative
- u Self-discipline
- u Good GPA
- u Time management skills
- u Focused
- u Persistent
- u Good interpersonal skills

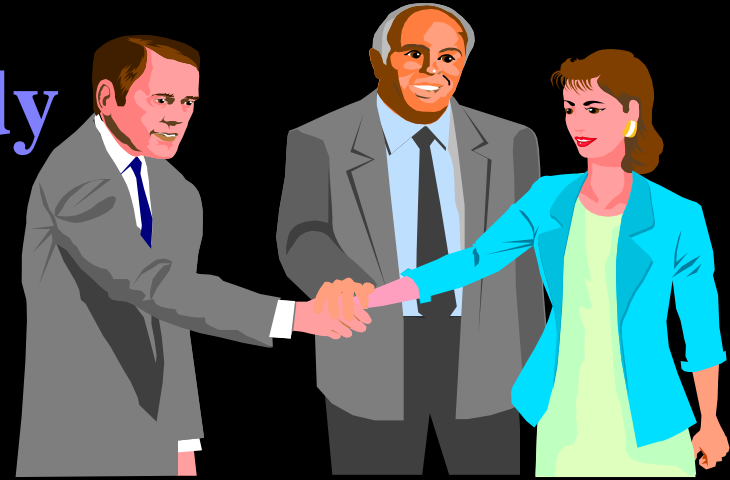


Decide what you want to study

- u If not sure----You are not alone--**Don't panic**
 - Do **research** on career options--counselors, books, web, professional organizations, people

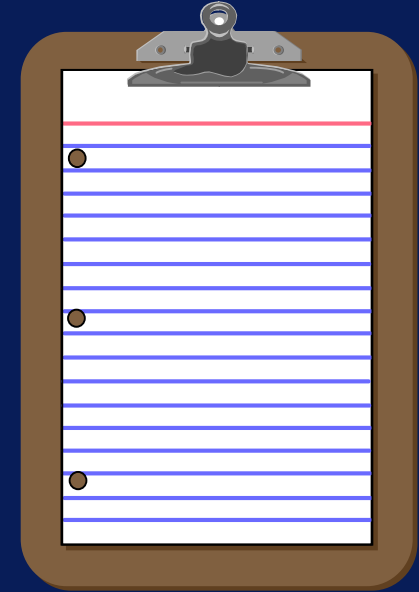


Deciding what to study (cont)



- u **Talk to Career Counselor**
- u **Talk to people ---professors, friends, alumni---**
---INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS
- u **Get *experience* in different fields to better understand options**
- u **Think about what you really *like to do* and relate it to jobs and academic areas**
- u **Review different Graduate School offerings**
 - Review list of *course descriptions* for different programs--learn what they are really about

Researching Graduate Schools



- **Compile list of schools offering your field of study**

Directories and web sites list schools by fields of study

- **Talk to people about schools, programs**

Professors

Administrators

Staff members

Professionals

Friends

- **Read professional journals--what schools are represented / professors?**

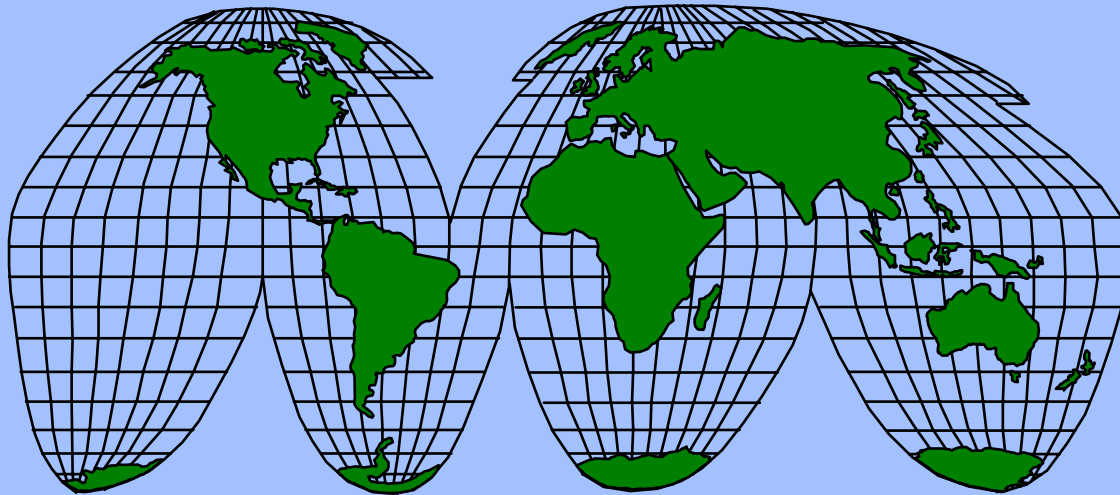


Narrow the List




Narrow the list of schools

- ✓ Location
- ✓ Admission requirements - Test scores, grades, field experience, ...
- ✓ Time frame of program -
Day, evening, part-time, full-time----Start time also



Narrow list of schools (cont)

- ✓ **Reputation and mission of school, program**
 - ✓ **Programs and coursework offered**
 - ✓ **Professor's backgrounds and interests**
 - ✓ **Current Students' and Alumni's comments**
 - ✓ **Accessibility of faculty**
 - ✓ **Accreditation (more important in some fields than others)**
- 

Choosing a School

“Attend the best school to which you have been accepted and can afford”

▶▶ Academic Requirements

Entrance Test Scores

Grades


▶▶ Class and Program Offerings

▶▶ Cost

▶▶ Financial Package offered to you

- Free Monies - Scholarships, fellowships, grants**
- Loans**
- Graduate Assistantships: teaching, research, administrative, resident halls**

Choosing a School (cont)

- ▶▶ **Size of student body in relation to size of faculty**
 - ▶▶ **Facilities (library, housing, study space, etc.)**
 - ▶▶ **Demographics of student body**
 - ▶▶ **Enrollment and class size**
 - ▶▶ **Make a site visit (research professors before visit)**
- 

Rankings---Beware

- The American Bar Association refuses to recognize or cooperate in ranking or rating of law schools.
- “No rating of law schools beyond the simple statement of their accreditation status is attempted or advocated by the official organizations in legal education. Qualities that make one kind of school good for one student may not be as important to another. Prospective law students should consider a variety of factors in making their choice among approved schools.”
- What is the best school for you?

School Admission Criteria

- ❑ GRE, GMAT, MAT, MCAT, LSAT, PCAT scores
- ❑ GPA
- ❑ Personal Essay
- ❑ Work experience
- ❑ Letters of reference / recommendation
- ❑ Interview
- ❑ Samples of previous work (optional)
- ❑ Language requirements
- ❑ Financial Aid Application



Admission Tests



Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

- **Computer adaptive test**
- **General aptitude test of three parts**
 - Verbal (English)
 - Quantitative (Math)
 - Analytical Writing section (1) your perspective on an issue
(2) critique an argument
- **\$140**
- **GRE Subject test – 8 tests of major fields of study-ex. Biology, Psychology**
 - Is not computerized
 - Not usually required- check with school
- **<http://www.gre.org>**

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) for business

- **Computer-adaptive test**
- **Two 30-min writing tasks: 1. Analyze an issue
2. Analyze an argument**
- **Quantitative section: 75 minutes with 37 multiple-choice questions- either 2 question types: Data sufficiency or Problem Solving**
- **Verbal section: 75 minutes 41 questions-Reading Comprehension, Critical Reasoning, and Sentence Correction**
- **Test does not presuppose any specific knowledge of business or other subject areas**
\$250
- **<http://www.mba.com>**

GRE

Testing Site Information

- **In Birmingham:**
Thomson Prometric Testing Center
Homewood, AL
205-263-5061
- **Call for appointment time and pricing**

GMAT

Testing Site Information

- **In Birmingham:**
Pearson Vue Center
600 Vestavia Parkway Suite 241
- **Call for appointment time and pricing 205-824-0017**

Miller Analogy Test (MAT)

- **Uses verbal analogies to test reasoning / analytic ability. It is intended to assess ability to recognize relationships between ideas, fluency in English language, and general knowledge of literature, philosophy, history, science, mathematics, and fine arts.**
- **100 partial Analogies to be completed in 50 minutes**
- **Some graduate schools accept MAT in lieu of GRE**

Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

- **Still a Paper exam**
- **A half-day standardized test required for admission in all ABA and other law schools**
- **It provides a standard measure of acquired reading and verbal reasoning skills that law schools can use as one of several factors in assessing applications.**
- **Not what you already know, but how well you might respond to training in law.**


Law School Admission Test (LSAT)

- **Administered 4 times a year**
- **Consists of five 35-minute sections of multiple-choice questions --about 100 questions (1 section not count in score)**
 - **one reading comprehension section**
 - **one analytical reasoning section**
 - **two logical reasoning sections**
 - **a fifth section to pretest new test items and forms**
 - **35 minute decision writing sample. This writing is not scored, but sent to law schools.**
- **Fee around \$123-late fee is additional \$62**
- **<http://www.lsac.org>**

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

- **4 1/2 hour computerized standardized, multiple-choice test designed to assess the examinee's problem solving, critical thinking, writing skills, and knowledge of science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine. - biology, chemistry, and physics**
- **Offered a few times in Jan, then April through Sept**
 - **About 22 times a year**

Potential Benefits of Waiting a Year or More

- **Work in related profession and decide if field is right for you**
 - **Earn money to help pay for education**
 - **Gain work experience which may assist admissions chances**
 - **Relax before the rigors of Graduate school**
 - **Mature**
- 

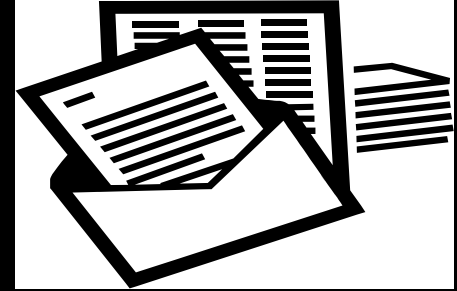
Potential Costs of Waiting a Year or More

- **May lose some reading, writing, and analytical skills**
- **May be difficult to motivate yourself to go back to school (may indicate your desire was not as strong as you had thought)**
- **The longer you wait, the longer it will take to finish**
- **Some schools have a deferment policy**
- **May lose contact with references: Go ahead and secure letters of recommendation before leave undergraduate institution.**

Application Tips

- **Follow Directions of application**
- **Are applying to specific program or department, even if send to admissions**
- **Start Early--Some applications due in Nov/ Dec. Most due in January or February**
- **Publicly funded universities may bias their admissions decisions in favor of state residents .**
- **Demographic characteristics of the applicant may be considered: race, gender, ethnicity, background**
- **Contact schools to be sure application is complete**
- **Discover selection procedure for each school**

Letters of Recommendation



- **May be a checklist format or a letter request**
- **Should come from people who know you well enough to offer a truly informed assessment of your abilities**
- **Academic references carry most weight**
- **Provide your recommenders with a copy of your personal statement and resume**
- **Can use a recommendation request form from Career Development**

Extracurricular Activities



- Participation in extracurricular activities- makes a “well-rounded” person

Involvement in social, religious, and service activities within the community

- Common sense is developed by working with people from various ethnic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds in diverse settings within the community.

- Do not sacrifice grades for activities



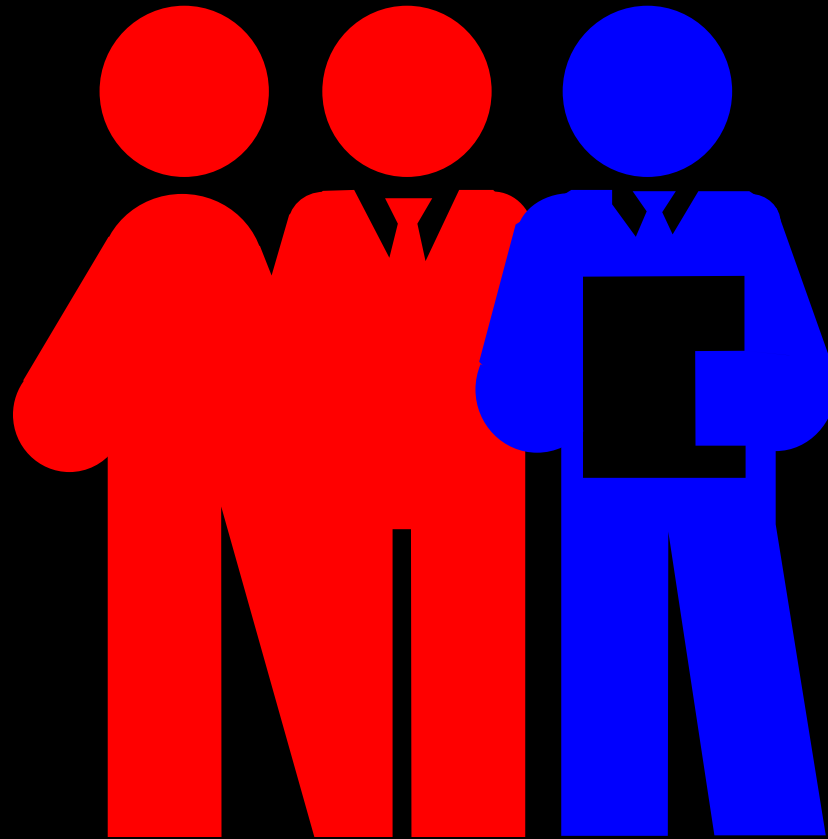
Personal Statement

- Usually in some manner covers the question: Who are you, and why do you want to go to graduate school?
- Is a thoughtful discussion of your commitment to being a responsible, ethical professional
- Needs to convey what kind of thinking, feeling human being you are
- Use clarity, conciseness, and candor
- Draw attention away from your weak points by focusing on your strengths.
- Try to not exceed 2 pages (length may be mandated)

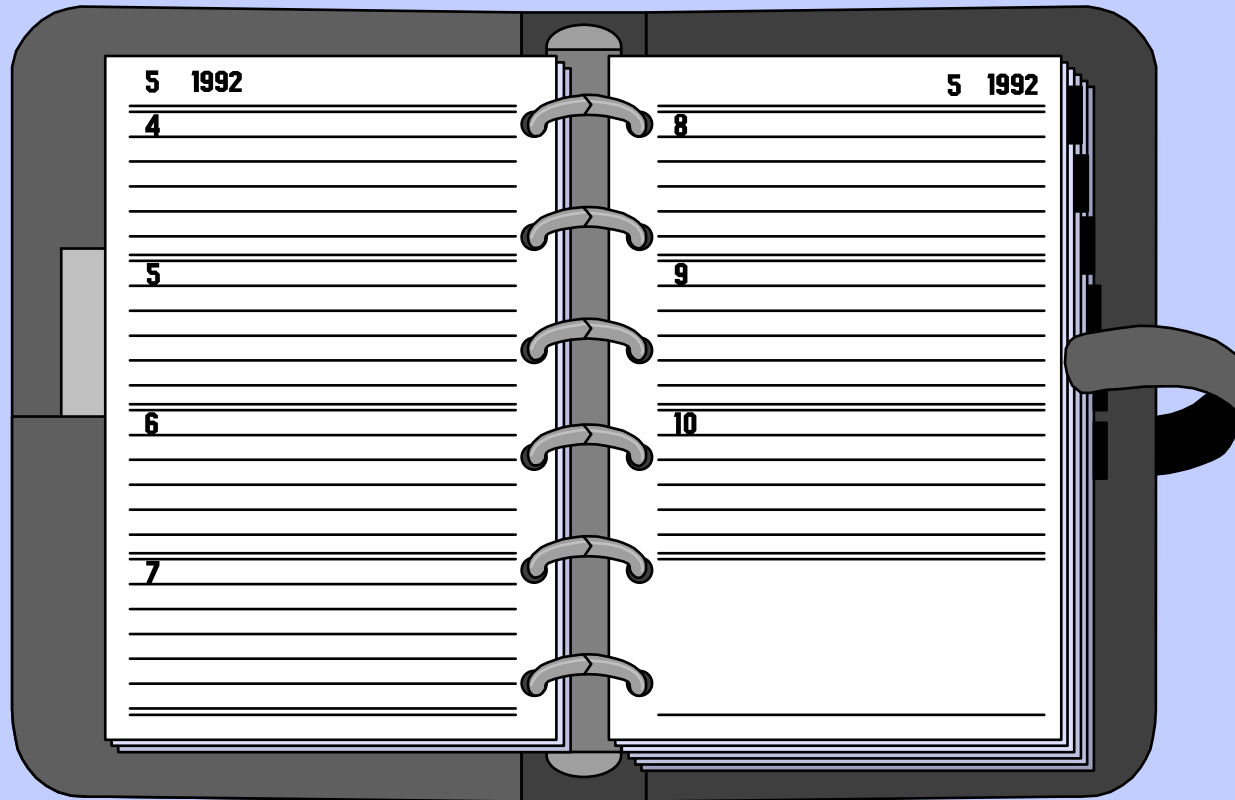
Funding Graduate School

- **3 forms of financial aid**
 - **Grants / scholarships which do not require repayment**
 - **Wages, which are provided in return for work**
 - **Loans, which require repayment**
 - 75% students finance education with loans**

Questions to Ask Graduate Schools



Plan Ahead !!!



What if you don't get in?

Ask yourself: Do I want to go into graduate school in that field?

IF NO:

- Rejection can be a relief. Start looking for a job. You can always apply again in the future

IF YES:

- Evaluate your application.
- Talk to the programs and professors for feedback, then strengthen your application through additional coursework or experience.

Look Forward to :



Any Questions???

**Career Development Center
Samford University
Birmingham, AL**