



Fiction
Feedback

Ten Top Tips How to Win Writing Competitions

1. Follow the rules. Sounds simple, but many good writers disqualify their entries by exceeding the word limit by even a few words or forgetting to take their name off the manuscript. This is the easy bit, so make sure you read rules thoroughly for every competition.
2. Be original. Come up with something that's going to make your entry memorable.
3. If there is a theme, best to avoid obvious interpretations.
4. But whatever you do, don't forget the theme. Themed competitions will always have 'how well does it match the theme?' as a criterion for judging.
5. Find out what the other criteria are. Characterisation is likely to be one. To get this right, consider how you make your characters come to life. In a short story, don't introduce too many.
6. Another criterion is likely to be quality of prose. More than one or two typos and you're up against entries which are perfect. Get someone expert to read it thoroughly.
7. Engage the emotions. That's what we all want in a story.
8. Make sure things have changed at the end from where they were in the beginning.
9. Don't send a significantly shorter entry than the maximum word count. The more words, the more potential for a satisfying story, so give yourself that advantage.
10. Find an interesting title. Whatever you do, don't just use the theme. Remember Tip 2.

* **'On the Edge' Fiction Feedback/Chorley Writers short story competition:** closing date 15 Dec 2019, max word count 2,500; entry fee: £6; prizes: £100, £50 & £20 x 3 – visit www.chorleywriters.org.uk

* **The Crime Writers' Association Margery Allingham Short Mystery Competition**

Entry fee: £12; prize: £500; deadline: 29 Feb 2020. Theme and details: www.thecwa.co.uk/the-debuts

* The **CWA Debut Dagger** for the opening of a crime novel: see website above for full details.

Shortlisted entrants have their work sent to agents and publishers. Deadline: 29 Feb 2020.

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***Fiction Feedback editorial consultancy**, established in 2008, has helped many authors to publication.*

*We work for authors and publishers alike and provide critiques, developmental and copy-editing. Dea Parkin, Fiction Feedback Editor-in-Chief, is also **Secretary of the Crime Writers' Association** and administers the CWA Debut Dagger and the Margery Allingham Short Mystery Competition.*