

Competition Topics & Criteria For 2025

Website Link: www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/

COMPETITION COORDINATOR – DEBBIE McDERMOTT

JUDGES

LEVEL 1



**Debbie
McDermott**

LEVEL 2



**Shirley
Jamieson**

LEVEL 3



**Julia
Martin**

Which Level Do I enter?

- Level 1:** For new members and all other members who haven't competed enough to be promoted to Level 2. Age limit: 16 years old or over.
- Level 2:** For members who have been promoted from Level 1 by the judges. Age limit: 16 years old or over.
- Level 3:** For members who have been promoted from Level 2 by the judges, plus members on the Honours List. Age limit: 16 years old or over.

Entries are to be the sole work of the writer and no collaboration is allowed.

If you're not sure what Level you are on, please contact the Competition Coordinator, Debbie McDermott, at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

Formatting and Entry Guidelines and Criteria

Font: Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold Title Case, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

Paragraph Spacing: 6 pt **Indentation:** None **Alignment:** Justified

Wordcount: Do NOT include titles, footnotes or bibliographies in the wordcount (unless informed otherwise) and ensure main content is no more than 5% above or below the wordcount. Maximum wordcounts must not be exceeded at all.

Send a photo of yourself for publishing purposes.

EMAILING YOUR ENTRY

Your entry should be emailed to the competition judge as a Microsoft or Open Office Word document attachment, complete with word count, your name and your locality, by the 1st of the month prior to the magazine's publication date. Only one entry per entrant is allowed in any given issue of the magazine.

Prizes and Promotion Criteria

Level 1 contestants who achieve overall 1st, 2nd or 3rd places in the first three competitions of the year will be promoted to Level 2. Level 2 contestants who achieve overall 1st or 2nd places in the first three competitions of the year will be promoted to Level 3. Level 3 contestants who achieve overall 1st, 2nd or 3rd places at least three times across two consecutive years or six-month periods will be promoted to the Honours List. At the end of the first three competitions of the year, all contestants go back to zero points for the final three competitions of the year and the process of working towards being promoted to the next level begins again. There will be a mid-year and end-of-year awarding of certificates and prizes in the form of gift vouchers to overall Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 winners. To be promoted to Level 2 or 3, contestants must receive points at least three times on their current Level. The judges also require regular entries plus improved writing.

Topics

LEVEL ONE Judge – Debbie McDermott

FEBRUARY – due 1 January

Write a comical story with a Christian takeaway message using the following homonyms (words that sound the same but have different meanings) at least once—
week | weak : find | fined : foul | fowl: bawled | bald : bare | bear : sight | site : here | hear
(500 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

APRIL – due 1 March

Is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre the real location where Jesus was crucified, or was it on the skull-shaped hill outside Jerusalem? Research the topic, then write an article on your findings. Citations from your research may comprise up to 20% of the wordcount and you must include a brief bibliography. (400 words, excluding bibliography)

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

JUNE – due 1 May

Imagine you are a witness to Jesus raising the widow's only son from the dead (see Luke 7:11-17). Write a first-hand account detailing how this event impacted you. (400 words)

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

AUGUST – due 1 July

Write an adventure story suitable for boys aged 13 to 15 years old. Use age-appropriate language and ensure your story contains plenty of action and excitement to engage and maintain the interest of your young readers. Also include a strong takeaway message they will remember. (500 words)

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

OCTOBER – due 1 September

Jesus said to the church of Laodicea, "I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends" (Revelation 3:20 NLT). Write an essay on what this statement means and how to apply it. Ensure you include a good introduction and conclusion. (400 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

DECEMBER – due 1 November

Record the conversation two Christian friends are having about Christmas. As one approves of the festival and the other opposes it, ensure you clearly present both arguments in their dialogue and come to a satisfactory conclusion. At least 90% of the entry is to be in dialogues so take care to keep taglines to a bare minimum. (400 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

LEVEL TWO – Shirley Jamieson

FEBRUARY – due 1 January

Write a poem with a rhythm to show the natural beauty of New Zealand's coast, bush or mountains. Describe how it draws you to the Creator. (Maximum 20 lines)

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

APRIL – due 1 March

"Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). At Bible study you and your friend have been learning about why John the Baptist announced that when he saw Jesus coming. Write a dialogue as if you are discussing it, bringing in the Passover in Exodus 12:21-28. (500 words)

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

JUNE – due 1 May

Share your testimony to show what inspires you to write. Have you received encouragement that would also encourage other writers? (400 words)

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

AUGUST – due 1 July

Describe a hobby or pastime you enjoy doing, showing what materials, tools and expertise or training you need. (400 words)

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

OCTOBER – due 1 September

Write a fiction story beginning with the sentence, "It was going to be a disaster – he just knew it." Choose an imaginative title and a surprising ending to the story. (500 words)

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

DECEMBER – due 1 November

Write an allegory that highlights a biblical truth. An allegory is a story using fictional characters, such as animals or even inanimate objects, acting in imaginative ways to give a moral message to the reader. (500 words)

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

LEVEL 3 Judge – Julia Martin

FEBRUARY – due 1 January

Write a review (suitable for *The Christian Writer* magazine) of a Christian book or film produced within the past three years. (300 words)

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

APRIL – due 1 March

Choose one of the seven 'I am' statements Jesus made to describe himself and what he did, as recorded in John's gospel. Write a devotional based on your chosen statement and conclude with a takeaway message and short poem or prayer. (400 words)

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

JUNE – due 1 May

Write a poem in any format depicting the state of the world today but ending with the hope of the Christian believer. (24 lines maximum)

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

AUGUST – due 1 July

Write a précis of Stephen's speech delivered to the Jewish Sanhedrin prior to his martyrdom, as recorded in Acts 7:1-53. (400 words maximum)

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

OCTOBER – due 1 September

Write a short story in which the main character's life is drastically changed as the result of a sudden decision. Can be Christian or secular. (400 words)

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

DECEMBER – due 1 November

Choose a New Zealander you believe is worthy of an honour's award. Tell us about the person and why you consider he or she deserves public recognition. (250 words)

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org