Editing Tips for entering competitions and/or submitting copy.

Editors are like everyone else—busy, and, quite possibly—lazy. The cleaner your copy: the greater your chances of being printed.

Although copy may look fine on your screen, editors, seeking format continuity, will have to adjust it to suit the style of their printed document. Formatting is not the writer's task.
For example, do not add automatic spacing after pars, and do not double-space lines.

Most editors use Show/hide to indicate where paragraphs have been inserted when writers have pressed 'Enter'. On MS Word programmes this can be found by pressing Ctrl + *.
A symbol of something looking like the mirror image of the capitals IP will then appear at the end of each par. On later versions of MS Word, the 'IP' symbol may be on the Home ruler. [Show and hide 'dots' and 'IP's do not appear with print.] Use show/hide yourself.
Show/hide will also place a small dot between words every time the writer taps the space bar. Typists trained with the old Pitmans system generally tap the space bar twice at the end of sentences, which annoys today's editors. Also, do not use the space bar to make copy fit the page or line.

To indicate ellipsis— Press 'ctrl + alt + fullstop'. [not three full stops].
To indicate a big dash [em dash]—Press ctrl + alt + the minus sign at the top of the calculator numerals. [Top right on desktop keyboard].
To indicate a smaller dash [en dash]. Press ctrl + the minus sign at the top of the numerals.
Em dashs should not be spaced out, but should be hard-up between words.

Copy should be forwarded in its simplest form. Do not embellish copy with images and art work. These (if you think they will be used) should be sent separately.

MS Word spell check is useful, but won't highlight all errors. MS Word will also make spontaneous changes, which may destroy your meaning. Use find and replace to check up on words like 'there' 'their' and 'they're' which are often confused. Likewise 'its' and 'it's', 'your' and 'you're', the amazing apostrophe, which can pop up before an 's', after an 's' (womens') etc, etc.

Valid Press uses Office 2007 on PC.

As you write, and before you submit, why not?
Read it aloud. Listen for forced dialogue. Avoid using dialogue to give narrative.
Read it backwards. Typo's and errors will become more apparent.
Get someone else to read it, both to you and to themselves.
Remove tautological redundancies which say the same thing twice (or, as in this case, thrice).

Editing generally involves removing words. Why not sharpen your copy yourself? Editing also involves ensuring writing flows, that the reader does not falter.
Keep it tight and alive, remove flash latinate words, and restrict adjectives and adverbs.
Above all TELL A STORY. Therefore: BEGINNING +MIDDLE= [accelerated and tightened] END, (hopefully, but not necessarily, with some revelation for both readers and characters).