

## Chapter 2

# In a Nutshell

You write a different document based on how you define your audience. Because your understanding of your audience controls so many of your writing decisions, analyze the audience before you write. Create an audience profile by answering these questions:

- ▶ Who are they?
- ▶ How much do they know?
- ▶ What do they expect?

**Find out who your audience is.** Is it one person or a group or several groups? Are you writing a memo to a specific individual or instructions for “typical” workers?

**Estimate how much they know.** If they are advanced, they know what terms mean, and they understand the implications of sentences. If you are addressing beginners, you have to explain more.

**Determine expectations.** Expectations are the factors that affect the way in which the audience interprets your document. Will it conform to their sense of what this kind of document should look and sound like? Will it help them act in the situation? Does it reflect a sense of the history of the situation or the consequences of acting?