

## Chapter 7

# In a Nutshell

*Visual aids* help readers by summarizing data and by showing patterns.

### Common types of visual aids.

*Tables* have rows and columns of figures. Place the items to compare (corporate sales regions) down the left side and the ways to compare them (by monthly sales) along the top. The data fill in all the appropriate spaces.

*Line graphs* illustrate a trend. Place the items to compare along the bottom axis (days of the week) and the pattern to illustrate (the price of the stock) along the left axis. The line shows the fluctuation.

*Bar graphs* illustrate a moment in time. Place the items to compare along the bottom axis (four cities) and the terms to compare (population figures) along the left axis. The bars show the difference immediately.

*Pie charts* represent parts of a whole. They work best when they compare magnitude.

*Illustrations*, either photos or drawings, show a sequence or a pattern—the correct orientation for inserting a disk into a computer for example.

### Guidelines for using visual aids.

- ▶ Develop a *visual logic*—place visuals in the same position on the page, make them about the same size, treat captions and rules (black lines) the same way. Be consistent.
- ▶ Create neat visuals to enhance your clarity and credibility.
- ▶ Tell readers what to notice and explain pertinent aspects, such as the source or significance of the data.
- ▶ Present visual aids below or next to the appropriate text.