

## Chapter 14

# In a Nutshell

Formal format presents documents in a way that makes them seem more “official.” Often the format is used with longer (10 or more pages) documents, or else in documents that establish policy, make important proposals, or present the results of significant research.

Formal format requires a title page, a table of contents, a summary, and an introduction, in that order.

The *title page* gives an overview of the report—title, author, date, report number if required, and report recipient if required. Place all these items, separated by white space, at the left margin of the page.

The *table of contents* lists all the main sections and subsections of the report and the page on which each one begins.

The *summary*—often called “executive summary” and sometimes “abstract”—presents the report in brief. The standard method is to write the summary as a “proportional reduction”; each section of the summary has the same main point and the relative length as the original section. After your readers finish the summary, they should know your conclusions and your reasons.

The *introduction* contains all the usual introductory topics but gives each of them a head—background, scope, purpose, method, and recommendations.