

## *Your Home Directory*

When you log in to Unix, you're placed in a directory called your *home directory*. This directory, a unique place in the Unix filesystem, contains the files you use almost every time you log in. In your home directory, you can make your own files. As you'll see in a minute, you can also store your own directories within your home directory. Like folders in a file cabinet, this is a good way to organize your files.

## *Your Working Directory*

Your *working directory* (also called your current directory) is the directory you're currently working in. Every time you log in, your home directory is your working directory. You may change to another directory, in which case the directory you move to becomes your working directory.

Unless you tell Unix otherwise, all commands that you enter apply to the files in your working directory. In the same way, when you create files, they're created in your working directory unless you specify another directory. For instance, if you type the command `pico report`, the Pico editor is started on a file named *report* in your working directory. But if you type a command such as `pico /home/joan/report`, a *report* file is edited in a different directory—without changing your working directory. You'll learn more about this when we cover pathnames later in this chapter.

If you have more than one terminal window open, or you're logged in on several terminals at the same time, each session has its own working directory. Changing the working directory in one session doesn't affect others.

## *The Directory Tree*

All directories on a Unix system are organized into a hierarchical structure that you can imagine as a family tree. The parent directory of the tree (the directory that contains all other directories) is known as the *root directory* and is written as a forward slash (/).

The root contains several directories. Figure 3-1 shows a visual representation of the top of a Unix filesystem tree: the root directory and some directories under the root.