

# Written Without Ease

Read each source below. Then complete the activities on pages 13–15.

### Source 1

The novel *Gadsby* was written by Ernest Vincent Wright and published in 1939. It tells the story of its title character, an ambitious man named John Gadsby. He lives in a fictional American town called Branton Hills. This town is in decline, and the novel's protagonist decides to do something about it. *Gadsby* becomes mayor, and the town thrives.

That is the plot of *Gadsby*, but it is not what makes this novel really unique and ambitious. What makes *Gadsby* special is that it is written without the help of one very important thing: the letter e. There are over 50,000 words in *Gadsby*, and not one contains the letter e. This must have been difficult considering the letter e appears in about 12.5% of the words in the English language. It was so difficult in fact that as he typed the final manuscript, Wright tied down the letter e on his typewriter so that “none of that vowel might slip in, accidentally.”

So what drove this author to attempt such a feat? In the introduction to *Gadsby*, Wright said he was tired of hearing people say, “It can't be done.”

### Source 2

#### Roots

(from the Greek language)

*homo-* means “same”

*lipo-* means “missing”

*-gram* means “something written”

*-phone* means “sound”

### Source 3

The following chart shows the frequency with which each letter appears in words in the English language. Each percentage has been rounded to the nearest 0.5% (except for letters appearing in fewer than 0.5% of words).

Most Common Letters in English	
A	8%
B	1.5%
C	3%
D	4.5%
E	12.5%
F	2%
G	2%
H	6%
I	7%
J	0.15%
K	1%
L	4%
M	2.5%
N	6.5%
O	7.5%
P	2%
Q	0.09%
R	6%
S	6.5%
T	9%
U	3%
V	1%
W	2.5%
X	0.15%
Y	2%
Z	0.07%

# Written Without Ease *(cont.)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1:** Read each idea. Which source gives you this information? Fill in the correct bubble for each source. (Note: More than one bubble may be filled in for each idea.)

Information	Sources →	1	2	3
1. The letter <i>e</i> is in about 12.5% of words in English.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Wright tied down the <i>e</i> key while typing <i>Gadsby</i> .		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The root <i>-phone</i> means “sound.”		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The most commonly used letter in English is <i>e</i> .		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Part 2:** Fill in the bubble next to the best answer to each question.

5. Which is **not** true of John Gadsby?

- (A) He is the author of *Gadsby*.
- (B) He is the title character of *Gadsby*.
- (C) He is the protagonist of *Gadsby*.
- (D) He is the mayor of Branton Hills.

6. According to Source 3, what are the five most common letters in the English language? They must be in the correct order from one (most common) to five.

- (A) E, A, I, O, U
- (B) E, T, S, A, I
- (C) E, T, A, O, I
- (D) E, A, T, I, O

7. Which of these does not contain the letter *e*?

- (A) “What is missing in the book called *Gadsby*?”
- (B) “*Gadsby* is an ambitious book about an ambitious man.”
- (C) “All who pick up *Gadsby* will find it worthwhile.”
- (D) “John Gadsby is the protagonist of *Gadsby*.”

8. There is a word that combines two Greek roots and means “to leave out a letter.” What is this word, which could be used to describe a piece of writing like *Gadsby*?

- (A) a lipophone
- (B) a homogram
- (C) a lipogram
- (D) a homophone

**Part 3:** Search “Writing Without Ease” to find one example of each of the following. Then write the number of the source in which you located this information.

9. the name of an occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Source #: \_\_\_\_\_

10. a proper adjective \_\_\_\_\_ Source #: \_\_\_\_\_

# Written Without Ease (cont.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 4:** Refer back to the sources, and use complete sentences to answer these questions.

- 11.** From Source 2, we can see that the word *homophone* means “same sound.” Homophones are words that have the same sound but have different spellings and different meanings. Here are a few examples:

***bear* and *bare*      *see* and *sea*      *their, there,* and *they’re***

What homophone could be substituted for one of the words in the title “Written Without Ease”? Explain your answer. How is the title appropriate with either homophone?

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- 12.** Can you write an entire paragraph without ever using one letter? Give it a try. Choose one of the vowels below. Cross it out. Then write a paragraph that does not contain that letter. You can write about any subject you choose.

**A      E      I      O      U**

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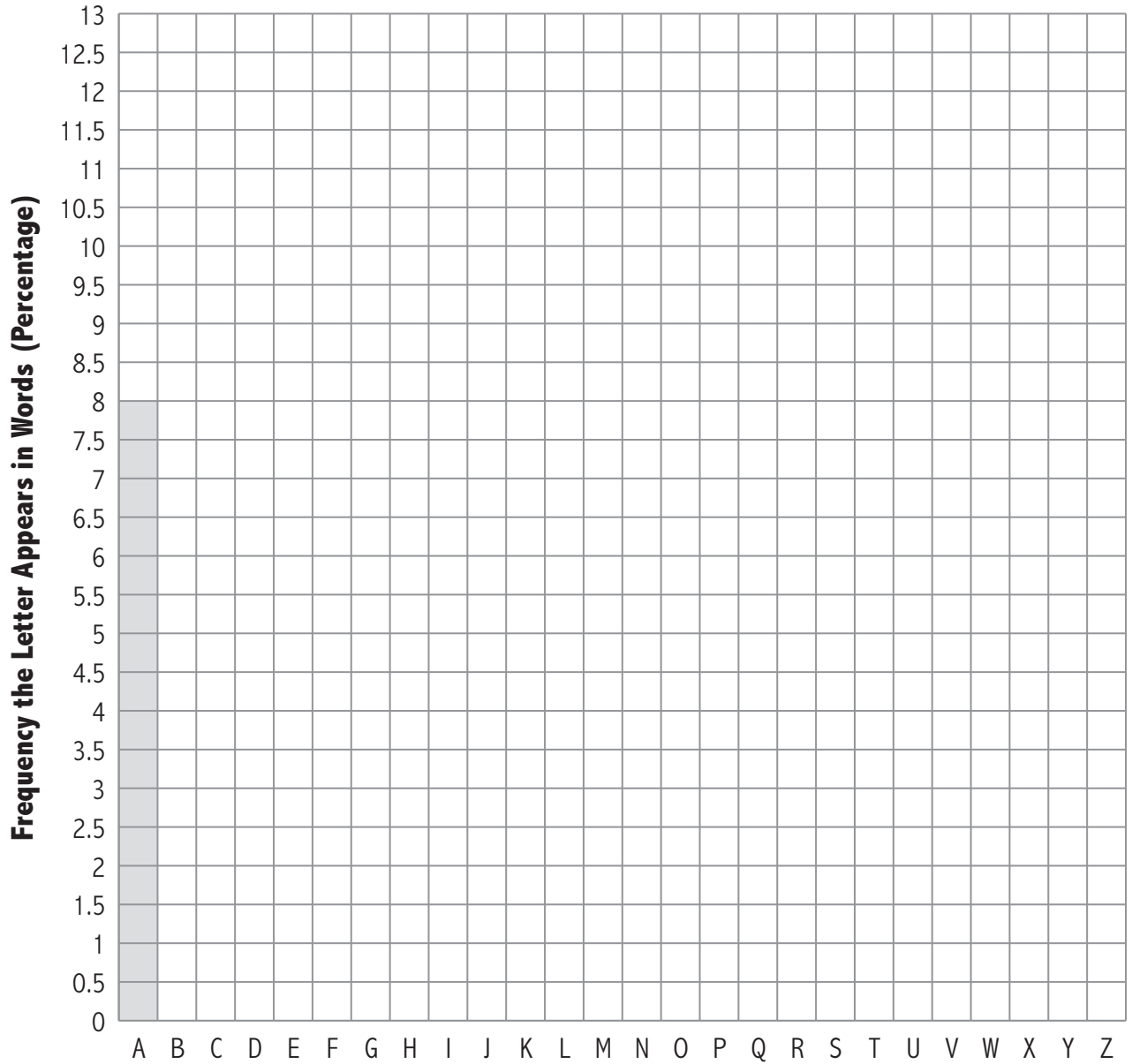
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# Written Without Ease *(cont.)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 4** *(cont.)*:

**13.** Complete the bar graph. The first bar has been shaded for you. Then answer the question below.



**Question:** Which of the data surprised you? Did you think a particular letter would appear more frequently or less frequently? Choose one letter, and explain why its frequency is surprising to you.

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# A Fallible Friend

Read each source below. Then complete the activities on pages 60–61.

## Source 1

After handing out the homework assignment, Ms. Hart cautioned her class, “Now, please please PLEASE remember to read over your essays before turning them in. Make sure your punctuation is correct and you have not made any spelling errors. Do not simply use the spellcheck function on your computer and assume that will be adequate. Yes, spellcheck can be your friend, but it is not *infallible*. It is not perfect. It does not know everything. It makes mistakes.”

She continued, “It’s true that spellcheck will catch obvious spelling errors such as F-R-E-I-N-D or F-A-M-I-L-L-Y. A squiggly underline will appear under the word, and you will know that the word needs to be corrected. But spellcheck often misses more subtle mistakes. What if you spell a word correctly, but it’s not the correct word for the sentence? Spellcheck won’t, for example, catch a misused homophone. *There, their, and they’re* may all sound the same to you, but they all *look* the same to spellcheck. No, nothing beats the human eyes and the human brain... so use yours! Your grade depends on it.”



## Source 2

A **prefix** is a word part that is placed in front of a base word and changes the base word’s meaning in some way. In English, there are several prefixes that mean “not” and add a negative meaning to the base word. Here are a few such prefixes:

**dis** — *dishonest* means “not honest”

**il** — *illegal* means “not legal”

**im** — *immature* means “not mature”

**in** — *inexact* means “not exact”

**ir** — *irresponsible* means “not responsible”

**un** — *unlikely* means “not likely”

## Source 3

### My Favorite Hobby

by J.T. Willis

Fishing is fun fore many reasons. It is relaxxing to be in a boat on a lake or in a pond. These places ofer piece and quiet.

I also love catching dinner for my familyly. Theirs nuthing better than fresh fish cooked over a fire.

I once cot a really wierd fish. Dad said we should throw it back in the water. That’s what we did.



# A Fallible Friend *(cont.)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1:** Read each idea. Which source gives you this information? Fill in the correct bubble for each source. (Note: More than one bubble may be filled in for each idea.)

Information	Sources →	1	2	3
1. <i>Family</i> is not spelled f-a-m-i-l-l-y.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Several prefixes mean “not.”		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. A prefix changes a base word’s meaning.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. <i>There</i> , <i>their</i> , and <i>there</i> are homophones.		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Part 2:** Fill in the bubble next to the best answer to each question.

5. Homophones are words that
- (A) sound the same.
  - (B) have the same meanings.
  - (C) have different meanings.
  - (D) Both A and B.
  - (E) Both A and C.
6. Which of the following errors might not be caught by spellcheck?
- (A) *its* instead of *it’s*
  - (B) *mits* instead of *mitts*
  - (C) *boxs* instead of *boxes*
  - (D) *wierd* instead of *weird*
7. You can infer that some words are underlined in Source 3 because
- (A) they are spelled incorrectly.
  - (B) they are vocabulary words.
  - (C) they show the main idea of the story.
  - (D) they contain prefixes.
8. The phrase “not infallible” is an example of a
- (A) double prefix.
  - (B) double negative.
  - (C) double meaning.
  - (D) spelling error.

**Part 3:** Search “A Fallible Friend” to find one example of each of the following. Then write the number of the source in which you located this information.

9. word meaning “used wrongly” \_\_\_\_\_ Source #: \_\_\_\_\_

10. word meaning “not precise” \_\_\_\_\_ Source #: \_\_\_\_\_

# Answer Key

## Unit 1. Aaron’s Errands (page 6)

### Part 1

- Sources 1 and 2
- Sources 1 and 2
- Source 1
- Sources 1 and 3

### Part 2

- B and C
- B
- C
- A

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

- “you were sleeping like a log” (1)
- Ariel’s (1, 2), sister’s (1)

### Part 4

- Yes, it was. The total from Party World was \$37.89, and the total from Foodland was \$58.01. This means that the total cost was \$95.90 ( $\$37.89 + \$58.01 = \$95.90$ ). Aaron would have \$4.10 left over, because  $\$100 - \$95.90 = \$4.10$ .
- Aaron is Ariel’s older brother. We know from Source 1 that Aaron is old enough to drive a car. We also know that Ariel is having a themed birthday party with mermaids, which probably means she’s younger. Also, their mom refers to Ariel’s “little friends.”
- No, he did not. The time on the Foodland receipt says 1:13 p.m., while the time on the Party World receipt reads 2:00 p.m. on the same day. This means that he shopped for groceries before shopping for party decorations.

Bonus: Accept appropriate responses. Students might mention that Aaron was buying several items—such as ice and ice cream—that would need to be kept very cold. So, it would be wiser to shop for decorations first and buy the food last.

## Unit 2. The Naming of the Storm (page 9)

### Part 1

- Source 3
- Sources 2 and 3
- Sources 1, 2, and 3
- Source 3

### Part 2

- D
- B
- D
- A

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

- alphabetical (3)
- evacuate (1)

### Part 4

- Hurricane season seems to take place in late summer. In Sources 2 and 3, we are given several examples of devastating hurricanes, all of which took place in August

through October. Of the options given, these months most closely fall in the season of “late summer.”

- Accept appropriate responses.
- Students should supply one name for each letter of the alphabet, with the exceptions of Q, U, X, Y, and Z. They should not use any of the hurricane names mentioned in the sources.

## Unit 3. Written Without Ease (page 12)

### Part 1

- Sources 1 and 3
- Source 1
- Source 2
- Source 3

### Part 2

- A
- C
- B
- C

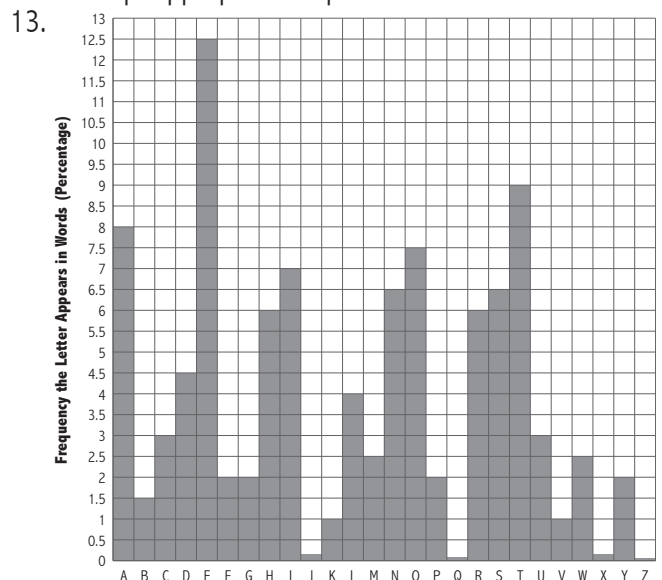
### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

- mayor (1), author (1)
- English (1, 3), American (1), Greek (2)

### Part 4

- Instead of “Written Without Ease,” the title could have been “Written Without *Es*.” This is because “ease” and “es” are homophones, and both titles would be true of the novel called *Gadsby*. It was difficult to write, and the letter *e* never appears in it.
- Accept appropriate responses.



## Unit 4. An Eponymous Comet (page 16)

### Part 1

- Source 4
- Source 3
- Source 2
- Sources 1 and 3

# Answer Key *(cont.)*

- The oldest one can be on a golden birthday is 31, because that is the most days a month can have.
- Accept responses that show an understanding of the term “golden birthday.”

## Unit 14. Everything Floats (page 49)

### Part 1

- Source 2
- Source 2
- Source 1
- Source 1

### Part 2

- D
- D
- B
- C

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

- lounging (1)
- microscopic (1)

### Part 4

- It is called the Dead Sea because most things cannot live in it. Large aquatic animals like fish can't live there, and neither can aquatic plants.
- Each section represents 5%. Students should shade in seven sections, which would equal 35%.
- From the other sources, we have learned that objects float in very salty water. Using this knowledge, we can deduce that Jim must have added a lot of salt to the red cup when Nick wasn't looking. The egg didn't float in the blue cup because the water did not contain enough salt (or any salt).

## Unit 15. Just Deserts (page 52)

### Part 1

- Sources 2 and 3
- Source 2
- Sources 2 and 3
- Sources 2 and 4

### Part 2

- C
- C
- B
- A

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

- converts (4)
- desserts (1)

### Part 4

- It would be most correct to say that the idiom applies to both Sam and Todd. For Sam, the term “just deserts” means “reward.” Her reward for being well prepared is that she enjoys the experience of walking through the desert. For Todd, the term “just deserts” means punishment. He is punished for not taking the trip seriously enough and not preparing

for the harsh desert environment. For failing to do this, his punishment is a miserable experience.

- “The sun beats down on you like an angry insect that you cannot swat away.”
- Students might also label the eyes (third eyelid keeps sand out), nose (nostrils close to keep sand out), coat (thick to protect against sand), hump (contains fat that converts to water).

## Unit 16. The Unneeded Earmuffs (page 56)

### Part 1

- Sources 2 and 3
- Source 3
- Sources 1 and 4
- Source 3

### Part 2

- C
- C
- B
- A

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

- thermometer (3)
- international (1)

### Part 4

- Mr. Shirk seems to prefer the Celsius scale. We can infer this when he stresses that “the rest of the world, along with the *entire* scientific community” uses the Celsius scale. After giving the freezing and boiling temperatures for the Celsius scale, he says, “Now isn't that easier to remember?”
- The earmuffs are unnecessary because Alicante is extremely warm at this time. We can guess from the time of year (August) and the information provided in Sources 3 and 4 that Maria means the temperature is 35°C. Using the converter in Source 2, this means that it's about 95°F. That's several degrees warmer than the average August temperature in Alicante. Juan should be packing hot-weather clothing.
- Accept appropriate responses.

## Unit 17. A Fallible Friend (page 59)

### Part 1

- Sources 1 and 3
- Source 2
- Source 2
- Source 1

### Part 2

- E
- A
- A
- B



# Answer Key *(cont.)*

## Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

9. misused (1)                      10. inexact (2)

## Part 4

11. *Infallible* means “perfect” or “does not make mistakes.” This definition is indirectly given in Source 1. Since we learn in Source 2 that the prefix *in-* means “not,” we can deduce that *fallible* means “not perfect” or “capable of making mistakes.”
12. fore, for; piece, peace; Theirs, There’s; cot, caught
13. Accept appropriate responses.

## Unit 18. Pioneers in Space (page 62)

### Part 1

1. Source 2                              3. Source 1  
2. Sources 2 and 3                      4. Source 2

### Part 2

5. D                      6. A                      7. D                      8. B

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

9. two decades (3)                      10. feat (3)

### Part 4

11. Students should point out that Andrew referred to Soviet space travelers as “astronauts.” The correct term is “cosmonauts.”
12. Accept appropriate responses.
- 13.

Year	Name	Accomplishment
1957	Laika	became the first animal to orbit Earth
1961	Yuri Gagarin	first human to orbit Earth
1962	John Glenn	first American to orbit Earth
1963	Valentina Tereshkova	first woman in space
1965	Alexei Leonov	first person to walk in space
1969	Neil Armstrong	became the first person to walk on the moon
1983	Sally Ride	first American woman in space
1995	Eileen Collins	first female to pilot a U.S. space mission
1998	John Glenn	oldest person in space

## Unit 19. A Grain of Salt (page 66)

### Part 1

1. Source 4                                      3. Sources 2, 3, and 5  
2. Sources 3 and 4                              4. Sources 2, 3, and 4

### Part 2

5. C                      6. D                      7. D                      8. A

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

9. *the* (2)                                      10. FOREVER (3)

### Part 4

11. Vick Z. Accept appropriate rewrites that contain complete sentences and proper grammar.
12. Todd Pepper. He owns a competing restaurant, and this would likely affect his opinion. He stands to profit from taking business away from Grain of Salt.
13. A. Foodie

## Unit 20. Winning Isn’t Everything (page 69)

### Part 1

1. Source 4                                      3. Source 2  
2. Source 5                                      4. Source 4

### Part 2

5. D                      6. A                      7. B                      8. B

### Part 3

The source number is given in parentheses.

9. capsizing (4)                                      10. sacrificed (4)

### Part 4

11. Accept appropriate responses in which students accurately rewrite one of the quotes, paraphrase the chosen quote, and then give an example of it from everyday life.
12. Most likely, students will choose the quote from Source 2. Lemieux did not win his race, but his heroic actions saved two of his fellow sailors.
13. Accept appropriate responses.

## Unit 21. Two One-of-a-Kinds (page 72)

### Part 1

1. Mole and Platypus                              3. Mole  
2. Platypus                                      4. Neither

### Part 2

5. C    7. A  
6. B (44 teeth, 22 appendages)              8. B