Figure 4.1 Variables continued—set value before use!

You can't use a variable before you set its value. So how does **contents** get its value?

```
class WashingMachine {
    private String contents;

    // The method add assigns a value to contents.
    public void add (String item) {
        contents = item;
    }

    // The method printContents prints the value of contents.
    public void printContents () {
        System.out.println("Inside you will find " + contents);
    }
}
```

Now that we've written **add** and **printContents**, let's use them in **TestWash**:

```
public class TestWash {
    public static void main (String[] args) {
        WashingMachine myWashingMachine = new WashingMachine ();
        myWashingMachine.add("sock");
        myWashingMachine.printContents();
    }
}
```

This will print out "Inside you will find sock".

Note: A variable can have only one value.

For example, if these four lines appeared inside **TestWash**,

```
myWashingMachine.add("sock");
myWashingMachine.printContents();
myWashingMachine.add("hat");
myWashingMachine.printContents();
```

then the first invocation of **printContents** would print "Inside you will find sock", while the second would print "Inside you will find hat".