JPA

The Java Persistence API (JPA) is a Java application programming interface specification that describes the management of relational data in applications using Java Platform, Standard Edition and Java Platform, Enterprise Edition.

Persistence in this context covers three areas:

the API itself, defined in the javax.persistence package

the Java Persistence Query Language (JPQL)

object/relational metadata

ORM

Object-relational mapping in computer science is a programming technique for converting data between incompatible type systems using object-oriented programming languages. This creates, in effect, a "virtual object database" that can be used from within the programming language. There are both free and commercial packages available that perform object-relational mapping, although some programmers opt to construct their own ORM tools.

The idea behind ORM is that in applications we deal with objects and classes while in databases we have to do with tables and rows. ORM is meant to help us map our entities to the database tables.