Process and Threads

Process: In simple words a process is executing a program. But not all, it's only an instance of a computing program. Several processes may be associated with the same program. Process contains program code and its current activity.

Thread: We can say thread is a light weight process. A thread of execution is the smallest sequence of programmed instructions that can be managed independently by scheduler. Threads reside inside the process. Each thread belongs to exactly one process. No thread exists outside the process.
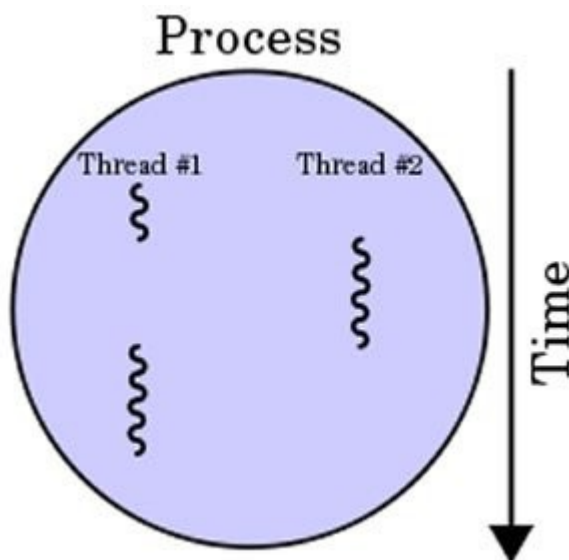
A process is an active program i.e. a program that is under execution. It is more than the program code as it includes the program counter, process stack, registers, program code etc. Compared to this, the program code is only the text section.

A thread is a lightweight process that can be managed independently by a scheduler. It improves the application performance using parallelism. A thread shares information like data segment, code segment, files etc. with its peer threads while it contains its own registers, stack, counter etc.

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The major differences between a process and a thread are given as follows:

Comparison Basis	Process	Thread
Definition	A process is a program under execution i.e an active program.	A thread is a lightweight process that can be managed independently by a scheduler.
Context switching time	Processes require more time for context switching as they are more heavy.	Threads require less time for context switching as they are lighter than processes.
Memory Sharing	Processes are totally independent and don't share memory.	A thread may share some memory with its peer threads.
Communication	Communication between processes requires more time than between threads.	Communication between threads requires less time than between processes .
Blocked	If a process gets blocked, remaining processes can continue execution.	If a user level thread gets blocked, all of its peer threads also get blocked.
Resource Consumption	Processes require more resources than threads.	Threads generally need less resources than processes.
Dependency	Individual processes are independent of each other.	Threads are parts of a process and so are dependent.
Data and Code sharing	Processes have independent data and code segments.	A thread shares the data segment, code segment, files etc. with its peer threads.
Treatment by OS	All the different processes are treated separately by the operating system.	All user level peer threads are treated as a single task by the operating system.
Time for creation	Processes require more time for creation.	Threads require less time for creation.
Time for termination	Processes require more time for termination.	Threads require less time for termination.