



Advanced Programming

Reflection & Runtime Type Information

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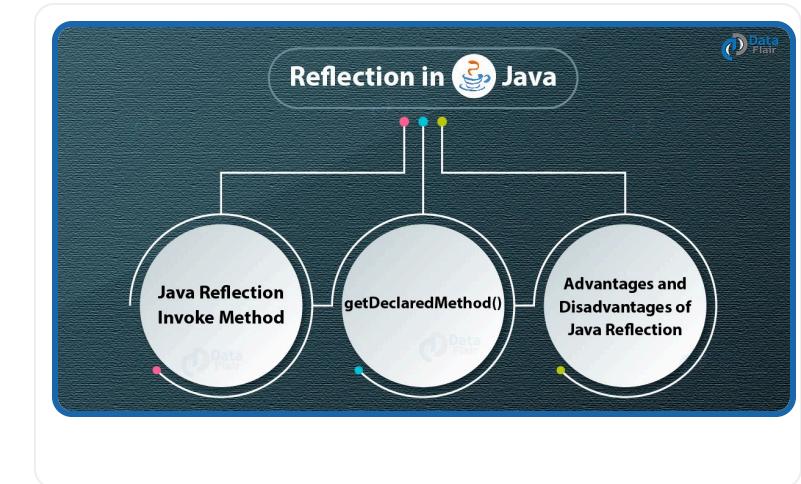
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Reflection — Concept

- **Reflection** allows a program to:
 - Inspect classes
 - Examine fields and methods
 - Create objects or call methods **at runtime**
- It treats **classes as data**, not just code.



Use cases:

- Framework development (Spring, Hibernate)
- Serialization
- Dependency Injection
- Testing tools



RTTI – Runtime Type Information

- RTTI allows the program to know **what type the object actually is at runtime**.
- This is useful when references are stored in **parent type** variables.

```
Object obj = "Sharif University";
System.out.println(obj.getClass().getName());
```

Output:

```
java.lang.String
```

The real object type is determined at runtime, not compile time.



getClass() – Retrieving Class Information

```
String s = "Sharif";
Class<?> c = s.getClass();
System.out.println(c.getName());
```

- `getClass()` always returns the **actual runtime type**, not the reference type.



Inspecting Class Members via Reflection

```
class Student {  
    public String name;  
    private int id;  
}
```

```
Class<?> c = Student.class;  
Field[] fields = c.getDeclaredFields();  
for (Field f : fields) {  
    System.out.println(f.getName());  
}
```

Output:

```
name  
id
```



Creating Objects Dynamically

```
Class<?> c = Class.forName("Student");
Object obj = c.getDeclaredConstructor().newInstance();
```

Use carefully:

- Allows **dynamic plugin loading**
- Used in frameworks
- But may reduce clarity & type safety



Invoking Methods via Reflection

```
Method m = c.getMethod("setName", String.class);  
m.invoke(obj, "Ali");
```

Where Errors Occur:

Exception	Meaning
ClassNotFoundException	Class name string incorrect
NoSuchMethodException	Method signature doesn't exist
IllegalAccessException	Attempt to access private method
InvocationTargetException	Method itself threw an exception

Reflection is powerful but fragile — always validate names & accessibility.



Reflection — Pros & Cons

Pros	Cons
Enables dynamic frameworks	Less performance (slow)
Can work with unknown classes	Breaks encapsulation
Useful for debugging & testing	Harder to maintain & refactor

Use Reflection **when necessary** — not as a default design choice.



Summary

Concept	Key Idea
Reflection	Inspect and modify program at runtime
RTTI	Actual object type is known at runtime
<code>getClass()</code>	Returns real object class
Powerful but Dangerous	Should be used with caution



Thank You!

Reflection & RTTI — Runtime Introspection



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