**Equality operator VS .equals()**

Using == compares the memory addresses of two objects, checking if they refer to the same location in memory. This is useful for checking if two references point to the exact same object instance. For primitive types (int, double, etc.), == compares their values directly.

On the other hand, .equals() compares the actual contents of the objects to determine if they are logically equal. For strings specifically, .equals() checks if the sequence of characters in two strings is the same.

When dealing with strings in Java, especially those created using string literals, there's a concept called the "string pool". String literals are stored in the string pool, and when you use == with string literals, Java checks if they refer to the same string literal in the pool.