Automatic garbage collection is the process of looking at heap memory, identifying which objects are in use and which are not, and deleting the unused objects. An in-use object, or a referenced object, means that some part of your program still maintains a reference to that object. An unused object, or unreferenced object, is no longer referenced by any part of your program. So the memory used by an unreferenced object can be reclaimed.

e.g.

public class MyClass

{

int num=100;

}

When you instantiate above class:

MyClass m1=new MyClass();

**Stack** **heap**

[ reference ] [ instance or object ]

m1

num

2000

1000

100

2000

If you say :

m1=null ;

**Stack** **heap**

**Unreferenced object, marked for GC**

[ reference ] [ instance or object ]

m1

num

null

1000

100

2000