

Difference between null and empty string [duplicate]



43

This question already has an answer here:

[Difference between null and empty \("" \) Java String](#) 17 answers



What is the difference between a null string (`String s = null`) and an empty string (`String s = ""`)?



This is what I have:

20

```
String s1 = ""; //print statement does not print any thing for s1 but s1.length()=0
String s2 = null; //print statement prints "null" for s2 but s2.length() gives exception
```

What does it mean?

java

string

null

nullpointerexception

edited Jun 15 '16 at 12:12



Bilesh Ganguly

2,003 1 18 38

asked May 18 '13 at 3:19



Shakeeb Ayaz

8,351 7 37 56

marked as duplicate by [Eric](#), [Stephen C](#), [acdcjunior](#), [carlosdc](#), [Jorge](#) May 18 '13 at 3:29

This question has been asked before and already has an answer. If those answers do not fully address your question, please [ask a new question](#).

5 This has been asked (and well-answered) before: [stackoverflow.com/questions/4802015/...](https://stackoverflow.com/questions/4802015/) – [Eric](#) May 18 '13 at 3:26

@Eric yep it is similar question but my intention was to know why for `s1.length()` returns zero and `s2.length()` gives exception..but anyhow thanks i got some more detail info about this on the page linked by you.. – [Shakeeb Ayaz](#) May 18 '13 at 3:32

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60



`String s1 = "";` means that the empty `String` is assigned to `s1`. In this case, `s1.length()` is the same as `"".length()`, which will yield `0` as expected.

`String s2 = null;` means that (`null`) or "no value at all" is assigned to `s2`. So this one, `s2.length()` is the same as `null.length()`, which will yield a `NullPointerException` as you can't call methods on `null` variables (pointers, sort of) in Java.

Also, a point, the statement

```
String s1;
```

Actually has the same effect as:

```
String s1 = null;
```

Whereas

```
String s1 = "";
```

Is, as said, a different thing.

edited Jul 21 '16 at 0:38



Hussein El Feky

4,944 3 35 51

answered May 18 '13 at 3:22



acdcjunior

88k 23 214 207



10



`Null` means nothing. Its just a literal. `Null` is the value of reference variable. But empty string is blank. It gives the `length=0`. Empty string is a blank value, means the string does not have any thing.

answered May 18 '13 at 3:27



JDGuide

4,414 9 35 52

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5

answered May 18 '13 at 3:25



Divya Rodrigues

51 2

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When Object variables are initially used in a language like Java, they have absolutely no value at all - not zero, but literally no value - that is `null`

For instance: `String s;`

If you were to use `s`, it would actually have a value of `null`, because it holds absolute nothing.

An empty string, however, is a value - it is a string of no characters.

```
String s; //Inits to null
String a = ""; //A blank string
```

`Null` is essentially 'nothing' - it's the default 'value' (to use the term loosely) that Java assigns to any Object variable that was not initialized.

`Null` isn't really a value - and as such, doesn't have properties. So, calling anything that is meant to return a value - such as `.length()`, will invariably return an error, because 'nothing' cannot have properties.

To go into more depth, by creating `s1 = ""`; you are initializing an object, which can have properties, and takes up relevant space in memory. By using `s2;` you are designating that variable name to be a String, but are not actually assigning any value at that point.

edited Aug 1 '13 at 5:31



sbk

2,378 1 15 18

answered May 18 '13 at 3:21



Singular1ty

2,151 1 16 36

2 this explanation is really broken. a value type cannot be null. – carlosdc May 18 '13 at 3:27

@carlosdc Can you elaborate? What do you mean a value type cannot be null? – Singular1ty May 18 '13 at 3:29

try `int i = null;` in java. – carlosdc May 18 '13 at 3:29

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