Difference between null and empty string [duplicate]



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This question already has an answer here:

<u>Difference between null and empty ("") Java String</u> 17 answers



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



This is what I have:

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```
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?







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/... – 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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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.

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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;
```

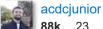
Whereas

String s1 = "";

Is, as said, a different thing.



answered May 18 '13 at 3:22



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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.

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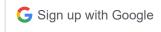
answered May 18 '13 at 3:27

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4,414 9 35 52

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https://stackoverflow.com/questions/16620354/difference-between-null-and-empty-string



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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.



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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