**Class loaders** are part of the Java Runtime Environment (JRE) responsible for dynamically loading classes into the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) at runtime.

**Key Types of Class Loaders:**

1. **Bootstrap ClassLoader:**
   * Loads core Java classes from the java.lang package (like String, Object).
   * Written in native code (not a regular Java class).
   * The parent of all class loaders.
2. **Extension ClassLoader:**
   * Loads classes from the ext directory (Java extensions).
3. **System ClassLoader:**
   * Loads classes from the classpath (i.e., application classes).
   * Often used to load classes from JAR files or directories specified by CLASSPATH.
4. **Custom Class Loaders:**
   * Developers can create their own class loaders by extending ClassLoader.
   * Useful for scenarios like dynamic code loading, application servers, or frameworks (e.g., Hibernate, Spring).

