The Java API specifications

The predeclared classes of Java, grouped into packages, constitute the API —the Application Programmer's Interface. The specification of all these classes, for version 8 of Java, appears at this website:
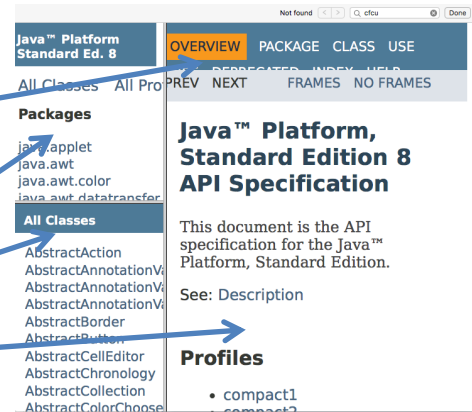
docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/

YOU are becoming a Java application programmer, and you will look at these API specs often. Our goal here is to introduce you to this website and to show you how you can easily get to it —or to the spec for any particular class.
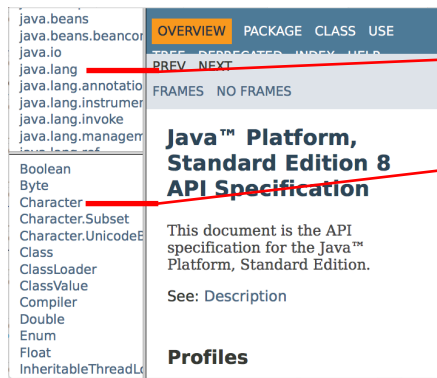
The main elements of this website

This is what the webpage looks like.
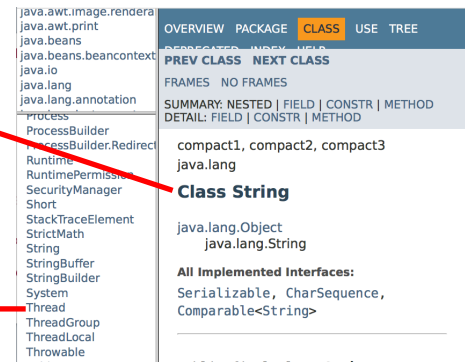
1. First, the navigation bar at the top allows you to move around this website. We won't discuss it now.
2. Second, the upper left pane gives a list of all packages in the API.
3. Third, the lower left pane gives a list of all classes in the API. It also lists the "interfaces" —we'll talk about interfaces in about 3 weeks.
4. **Fourth, the main pane will contain the description of some class. We'll show you that later.**

Choosing a particular class

First, scroll down the list of packages and choose package java.lang, which stands for "java language". Classes in java.lang help define the language, for example providing tools for character and string manipulation. Now, the lower left pane shows only the classes in package java.lang. Hey, there's class Character, which we'll look at later. Now scroll down the list of classes, choose class String, and click it. Now, the main pane contains a description of class String. We'll look at this pane in detail in a later video.

Ways to find the API specification of a class

You will be looking often at specifications of classes. You'll want to know how to get to them easily and quickly. There are at least three easy ways: bookmark the URL, get to it from the course web page, and google it. The third way is often the easiest to use: just use google (or some other search engine). To get to the Java spec for class String, type the following into a search-engine window and click on the most appropriate link that the search engine gives you:

java 8 String

When we do this using google, the first link that google gives us is the appropriate one; just click it:

String (Java Platform SE 8) – Oracle: https://docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/lang/String.html

Ways to get to the API specs

1. Bookmark docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/
2. In the navigation bar on the course webpage, click "links" and then "Java 1.8 API Specs".
3. Google "java 8 String" (replace "String" by any class in which you are interested) and then click the most appropriate link that google gives you.