Servlet Tutorial



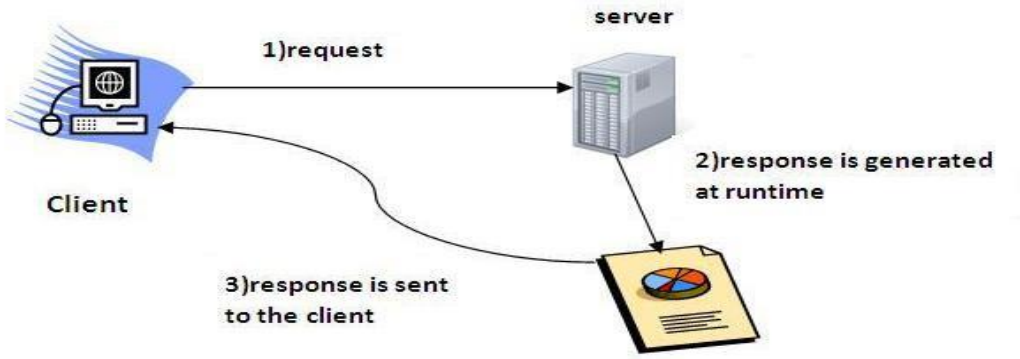
Servlet technology is used to create web application (resides at server side and generates dynamic web page).

There are many interfaces and classes in the servlet API such as Servlet, GenericServlet, HttpServlet, ServletRequest, ServletResponse etc.

What is a Servlet?

Servlet can be described in many ways, depending on the context.

- Servlet is a technology i.e. used to create web application.
- Servlet is an API that provides many interfaces and classes including documentations.
- Servlet is an interface that must be implemented for creating any servlet.
- Servlet is a class that extend the capabilities of the servers and respond to the incoming request. It can respond to any type of requests.
- Servlet is a web component that is deployed on the server to create dynamic web page.

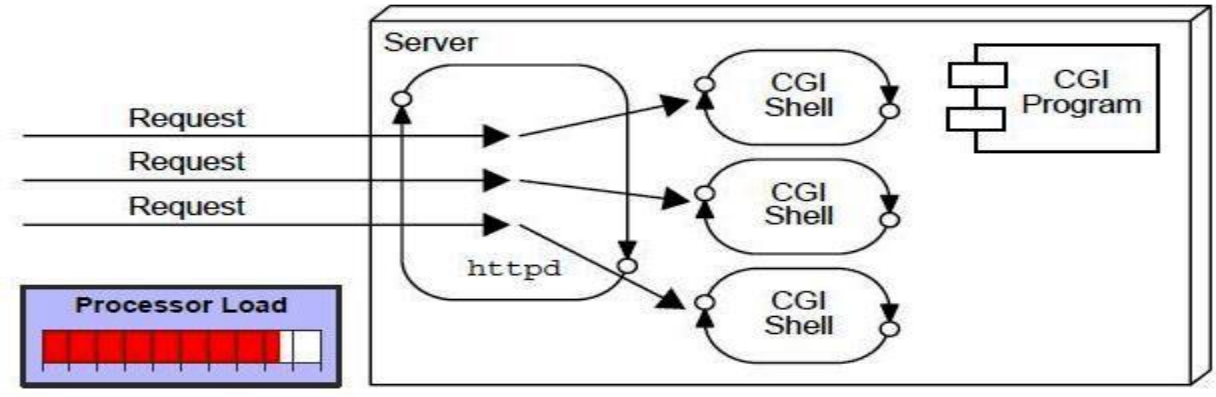


What is web application?

A web application is an application accessible from the web. A web application is composed of web components like Servlet, JSP, Filter etc. and other components such as HTML. The web components typically execute in Web Server and respond to HTTP request.

CGI(Commmon Gateway Interface)

CGI technology enables the web server to call an external program and pass HTTP request information to the external program to process the request. For each request, it starts a new process.

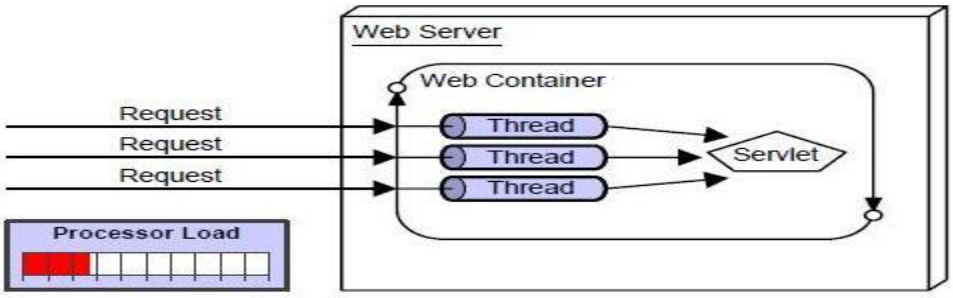


Disadvantages of CGI

There are many problems in CGI technology:

1. If number of clients increases, it takes more time for sending response.
2. For each request, it starts a process and Web server is limited to start processes.
3. It uses platform dependent language e.g. C, C++, perl.

Advantage of Servlet



There are many advantages of servlet over CGI. The web container creates threads for handling the multiple requests to the servlet. Threads have a lot of benefits over the Processes such as they share a common memory area, lightweight, cost of communication between the threads are low. The basic benefits of servlet are as follows:

1. **better performance:** because it creates a thread for each request not process.
2. **Portability:** because it uses java language.
3. **Robust:** Servlets are managed by JVM so we don't need to worry about memory leak, garbage collection etc.
4. **Secure:** because it uses java language..

Get vs. Post

There are many differences between the Get and Post request. Let's see these differences:

GET	POST
1) In case of Get request, only **limited amount of data** can be sent because data is sent in header.	In case of post request, **large amount of data** can be sent because data is sent in body.
2) Get request is **not secured** because data is exposed in URL bar.	Post request is **secured** because data is not exposed in URL bar.
3) Get request **can be bookmarked.**	Post request **cannot be bookmarked.**
4) Get request is **idempotent** . It means second request will be ignored until response of first request is delivered	Post request is **non-idempotent.**
5) Get request is **more efficient** and used more than Post.	Post request is **less efficient** and used less than get.

GET and POST

Two common methods for the request-response between a server and client are:

- **GET**- It requests the data from a specified resource
- **POST**- It submits the processed data to a specified resource

Servlet Vs CGI:

Let’s differentiate Servlet and CGI –

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Servlet Vs CGI :

Servlet	CGI (Common Gateway Interface)
Servlets are portable	CGI is not portable.
In Servlets each request is handled by lightweight Java Thread	IN CGI each request is handled by heavy weight OS process
In Servlets, Data sharing is possible	In CGI, data sharing is not available.
Servlets can link directly to the Web server	CGI cannot directly link to Web server.
Session tracking and caching of previous computations can be performed	Session tracking and caching of previous computations cannot be performed
Automatic parsing and decoding of HTML form data can be performed.	Automatic parsing and decoding of HTML form data cannot be performed.
Servlets can read and Set HTTP Headers	CGI cannot read and Set HTTP Headers
Servlets can handle cookies	CGI cannot handle cookies

Servlet	CGI (Common Gateway Interface)
Servlets can track sessions	CGI cannot track sessions
Servlets is inexpensive than CGI	CGI is more expensive than Servlets

Servlet Container

It provides the runtime environment for JavaEE (j2ee) applications. The client/user can request only a static WebPages from the server. If the user wants to read the web pages as per input then the servlet container is used in java.

The servlet container is used in java for dynamically generate the web pages on the server side. Therefore the servlet container is the part of a web server that interacts with the servlet for handling the dynamic web pages from the client.



Servlet Container States

The servlet container is the part of web server which can be run in a separate process. We can classify the servlet container states in three types:

- **Standalone:** It is typical Java-based servers in which the servlet container and the web servers are the integral part of a single program. For example:- Tomcat running by itself

- **In-process:** It is separated from the web server, because a different program is runs within the address space of the main server as a plug-in. For example:- Tomcat running inside the JBoss.
- **Out-of-process:** The web server and servlet container are different programs which are run in a different process. For performing the communications between them, web server uses the plug-in provided by the servlet container.

The Servlet Container performs many operations that are given below:

- Life Cycle Management
- Multithreaded support
- Object Pooling
- Security etc.
- **Servlet API**

1. Servlet API
2. Interfaces in javax.servlet package
3. Classes in javax.servlet package
4. Interfaces in javax.servlet.http package
5. Classes in javax.servlet.http package

The javax.servlet and javax.servlet.http packages represent interfaces and classes for servlet api.

The **javax.servlet** package contains many interfaces and classes that are used by the servlet or web container. These are not specific to any protocol.

The **javax.servlet.http** package contains interfaces and classes that are responsible for http requests only.

Let's see what are the interfaces of javax.servlet package.

Interfaces in javax.servlet package

There are many interfaces in javax.servlet package. They are as follows:

1. Servlet
2. ServletRequest
3. ServletResponse
4. RequestDispatcher
5. ServletConfig
6. ServletContext
7. SingleThreadModel
8. Filter
9. FilterConfig
10. FilterChain

Classes in javax.servlet package

There are many classes in javax.servlet package. They are as follows:

1. GenericServlet
2. ServletInputStream
3. ServletOutputStream
4. ServletRequestWrapper

Interfaces in javax.servlet.http package

There are many interfaces in javax.servlet.http package. They are as follows:

1. HttpServletRequest
2. HttpServletResponse
3. HttpSession
4. HttpSessionListener

Classes in javax.servlet.http package

There are many classes in javax.servlet.http package. They are as follows:

1. HttpServlet
2. Cookie
3. HttpServletRequestWrapper
4. HttpServletResponseWrapper
5. HttpSessionEvent

Servlet Interface

1. Servlet Interface
2. Methods of Servlet interface

Servlet interface provides common behaviour to all the servlets.

Servlet interface needs to be implemented for creating any servlet (either directly or indirectly). It provides 3 life cycle methods that are used to initialize the servlet, to service the requests, and to destroy the servlet and 2 non-life cycle methods.

Methods of Servlet interface

There are 5 methods in Servlet interface. The init, service and destroy are the life cycle methods of servlet. These are invoked by the web container.

Method	Description
public void init(ServletConfig config)	initializes the servlet. It is the life cycle method of servlet and invoked by the web container only once.

public void service(ServletRequest request,ServletResponse response)	provides response for the incoming request. It is invoked at each request by the web container.
public void destroy()	is invoked only once and indicates that servlet is being destroyed.
public ServletConfig getServletConfig()	returns the object of ServletConfig.
public String getServletInfo()	returns information about servlet such as writer,

TYPES OF SERVLETS:

A) Generic Servlet
B) Http Servlet

A) Generic Servlet class

1. GenericServlet class
2. Methods of GenericServlet class
3. Example of GenericServlet class

GenericServlet class implements **Servlet**, **ServletConfig** and **Serializable** interfaces. It provides the implementation of all the methods of these interfaces except the service method.

GenericServlet class can handle any type of request so it is protocol-independent.

Methods of Generic Servlet class

There are many methods in GenericServlet class. They are as follows:

1. **public void init(ServletConfig config)** is used to initialize the servlet.
2. **public abstract void service(ServletRequest request, ServletResponse response)** provides service for the incoming request. It is invoked at each time when user requests for a servlet.
3. **public void destroy()** is invoked only once throughout the life cycle and indicates that servlet is being destroyed.
4. **public ServletConfig getServletConfig()** returns the object of ServletConfig.
5. **public String getServletInfo()** returns information about servlet such as writer, copyright, version etc.
6. **public void init()** it is a convenient method for the servlet programmers, now there is no need to call super.init(config)
7. **public ServletContext getServletContext()** returns the object of ServletContext.
8. **public String getInitParameter(String name)** returns the parameter value for the given parameter name.

Servlet Example by inheriting the GenericServlet class

File: First.java

```
import java.io.*;

1. import javax.servlet.*;
2.
3. public class First extends GenericServlet
4. {
5. public void service(ServletRequest req,ServletResponse res)
6. throws IOException,ServletException
7. {
8.
9. res.setContentType("text/html");
10.
11.      PrintWriter out=res.getWriter();
12.      out.print("<html><body>");
```

```
13.         out.print("<b>hello generic servlet</b>");
14.         out.print("</body></html>");
15.
16.          }
17.          }
```

B) HttpServlet class

1. HttpServlet class
2. Methods of HttpServlet class

The HttpServlet class extends the GenericServlet class and implements Serializable interface. It provides http specific methods such as doGet, doPost, doHead, doTrace etc.

Methods of HttpServlet class

There are many methods in HttpServlet class. They are as follows:

1. **public void service(ServletRequest req,ServletResponse res)** dispatches the request to the protected service method by converting the request and response object into http type.
2. **protected void service(HttpServletRequest req, HttpServletResponse res)** receives the request from the service method, and dispatches the request to the doXXX() method depending on the incoming http request type.
3. **protected void doGet(HttpServletRequest req, HttpServletResponse res)** handles the GET request. It is invoked by the web container.
4. **protected void doPost(HttpServletRequest req, HttpServletResponse res)** handles the POST request. It is invoked by the web container.

Life Cycle of a Servlet (Servlet Life Cycle)

1. Life Cycle of a Servlet
    1. Servlet class is loaded
    2. Servlet instance is created
    3. init method is invoked
    4. service method is invoked
    5. destroy method is invoked

The web container maintains the life cycle of a servlet instance. Let's see the life cycle of the servlet:

1. Servlet class is loaded.
2. Servlet instance is created.
3. init method is invoked.
4. service method is invoked.
5. destroy method is invoked.

1) Servlet class is loaded

The classloader is responsible to load the servlet class. The servlet class is loaded when the first request for the servlet is received by the web container.

2) Servlet instance is created

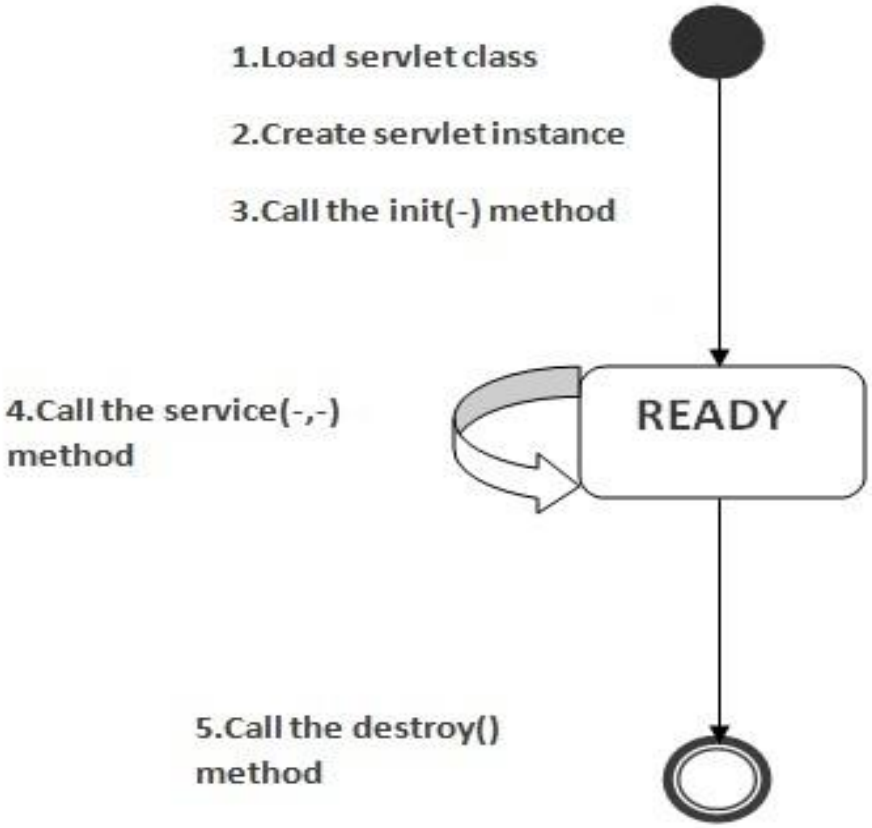
The web container creates the instance of a servlet after loading the servlet class. The servlet instance is created only once in the servlet life cycle.

3) init method is invoked

The web container calls the init method only once after creating the servlet instance. The init method is used to initialize the servlet. It is the

life cycle method of the javax.servlet.Servlet interface. Syntax of the init method is given below:

1. public void init(ServletConfig config) throws ServletException



4) service method is invoked

The web container calls the service method each time when request for the servlet is received. If servlet is not initialized, it follows the first three steps as described above then calls the service method. If servlet is initialized, it calls the service method. Notice that servlet is initialized only once. The syntax of the service method of the Servlet interface is given below:

```
1. public void service(ServletRequest request, ServletResponse respo
   nse)
2.   throws ServletException, IOException
```

5) destroy method is invoked

The web container calls the destroy method before removing the servlet instance from the service. It gives the servlet an opportunity to clean up any resource for example memory, thread etc. The syntax of the destroy method of the Servlet interface is given below:

```
1. public void destroy()
```

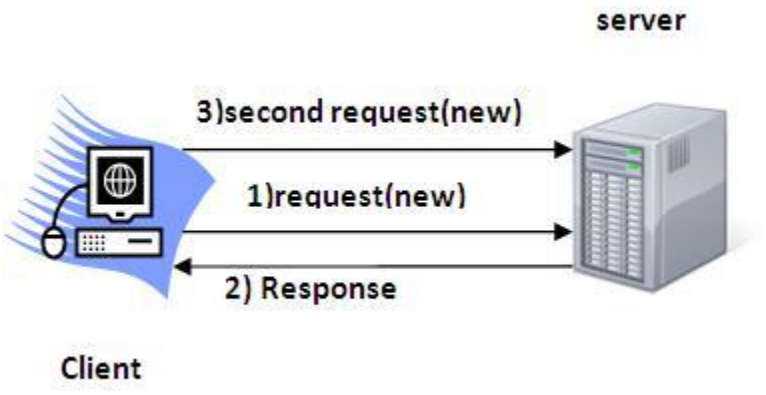
Session Tracking in Servlets:

Session simply means a particular interval of time.

Session Tracking is a way to maintain state (data) of an user. It is also known as **session management** in servlet.

Http protocol is a stateless so we need to maintain state using session tracking techniques. Each time user requests to the server, server treats the request as the new request. So we need to maintain the state of an user to recognize to particular user.

HTTP is stateless that means each request is considered as the new request. It is shown in the figure given below:



Session Tracking Techniques

There are four techniques used in Session tracking:

1. **Cookies**
2. **Hidden Form Field**
3. **URL Rewriting**
4. **HttpSession**

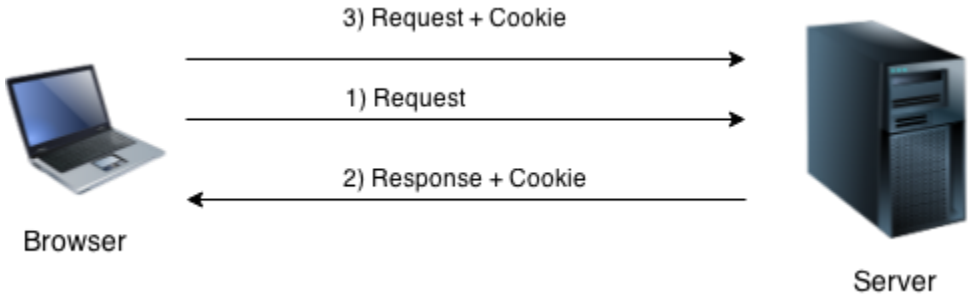
1) Cookies in Servlet:

A **cookie** is a small piece of information that is persisted between the multiple client requests.
A cookie has a name, a single value, and optional attributes such as a comment, path and domain qualifiers, a maximum age, and a version number.

How Cookie works

By default, each request is considered as a new request. In cookies technique, we add cookie with response from the servlet. So cookie is stored in the cache of the browser. After that if request is sent by the

user, cookie is added with request by default. Thus, we recognize the user as the old user.



Types of Cookie

There are 2 types of cookies in servlets.

1. Non-persistent cookie
2. Persistent cookie

Non-persistent cookie

It is **valid for single session** only. It is removed each time when user closes the browser.

Persistent cookie

It is **valid for multiple session** . It is not removed each time when user closes the browser. It is removed only if user logout or signout.

Advantage of Cookies

1. Simplest technique of maintaining the state.
2. Cookies are maintained at client side.

Disadvantage of Cookies

1. It will not work if cookie is disabled from the browser.
2. Only textual information can be set in Cookie object.

Note: Gmail uses cookie technique for login. If you disable the cookie, gmail won't work.

Cookie class

javax.servlet.http.Cookie class provides the functionality of using cookies. It provides a lot of useful methods for cookies.

Constructor of Cookie class

Constructor	Description
Cookie()	constructs a cookie.
Cookie(String name, String value)	constructs a cookie with a specified name and value.

Method	Description
public void setMaxAge(int expiry)	Sets the maximum age of the cookie in seconds.
public String getName()	Returns the name of the cookie. The name cannot be changed after creation.
public String getValue()	Returns the value of the cookie.
public void setName(String name)	changes the name of the cookie.
public void setValue(String value)	changes the value of the cookie.

Other methods required for using Cookies

For adding cookie or getting the value from the cookie, we need some methods provided by other interfaces. They are:

1. **public void addCookie(Cookie ck):**method of HttpServletResponse interface is used to add cookie in response object.
2. **public Cookie[] getCookies():**method of HttpServletRequest interface is used to return all the cookies from the browser.

How to create Cookie?

Let's see the simple code to create cookie.

```
1. Cookie ck=new Cookie("user","sonoo jaiswal");//creating cookie o
   bject
2. response.addCookie(ck);//adding cookie in the response
```

How to delete Cookie?

Let's see the simple code to delete cookie. It is mainly used to logout or signout the user.

```
1. Cookie ck=new Cookie("user","");//deleting value of cookie
2. ck.setMaxAge(0);//changing the maximum age to 0 seconds
3. response.addCookie(ck);//adding cookie in the response
```

How to get Cookies?

Let's see the simple code to get all the cookies.

```
1. Cookie ck[]=request.getCookies();
2. for(int i=0;i<ck.length;i++){
3.  out.print("<br>"+ck[i].getName()+" "+ck[i].getValue());//printing
   name and value of cookie
```

4. }
5.

2) Hidden Form Field

In case of Hidden Form Field **a hidden (invisible) textfield** is used for maintaining the state of an user.

In such case, we store the information in the hidden field and get it from another servlet. This approach is better if we have to submit form in all the pages and we don't want to depend on the browser.

Let's see the code to store value in hidden field.

```
1. <input type="hidden" name="uname" value="Vimal Jaiswal">
```

Here, uname is the hidden field name and Vimal Jaiswal is the hidden field value.

Real application of hidden form field

It is widely used in comment form of a website. In such case, we store page id or page name in the hidden field so that each page can be uniquely identified.

Advantage of Hidden Form Field

1. It will always work whether cookie is disabled or not.

Disadvantage of Hidden Form Field:

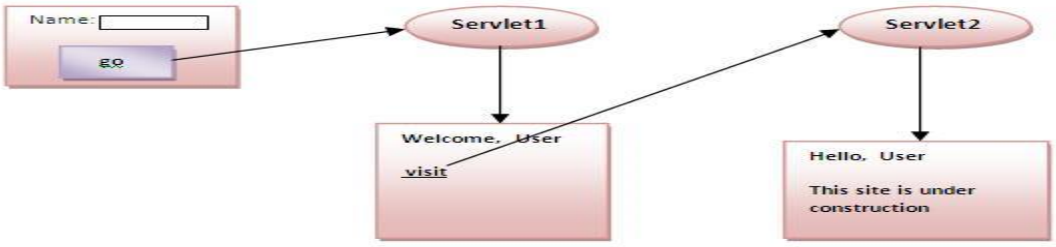
1. It is maintained at server side.
2. Extra form submission is required on each pages.
3. Only textual information can be used.

3) URL Rewriting:

In URL rewriting, we append a token or identifier to the URL of the next Servlet or the next resource. We can send parameter name/value pairs using the following format:

url?name1=value1&name2=value2&??

A name and a value is separated using an equal = sign, a parameter name/value pair is separated from another parameter using the ampersand(&). When the user clicks the hyperlink, the parameter name/value pairs will be passed to the server. From a Servlet, we can use getParameter() method to obtain a parameter value.



Advantage of URL Rewriting

1. It will always work whether cookie is disabled or not (browser independent).
2. Extra form submission is not required on each pages.

Disadvantage of URL Rewriting

1. It will work only with links.
2. It can send Only textual information

4) HttpSession interface:

In such case, container creates a session id for each user.The container uses this id to identify the particular user.An object of HttpSession can be used to perform two tasks:

1. bind objects
2. view and manipulate information about a session, such as the session identifier, creation time, and last accessed time.
3.



How to get the HttpSession object ?

The HttpServletRequest interface provides two methods to get the object of HttpSession:

1. **public HttpSession getSession():**Returns the current session associated with this request, or if the request does not have a session, creates one.
2. **public HttpSession getSession(boolean create):**Returns the current HttpSession associated with this request or, if there is no current session and create is true, returns a new session.

Commonly used methods of HttpSession interface

1. **public String getId():**Returns a string containing the unique identifier value.
2. **public long getCreationTime():**Returns the time when this session was created, measured in milliseconds since midnight January 1, 1970 GMT.

3. **public long getLastAccessedTime():**Returns the last time the client sent a request associated with this session, as the number of milliseconds since midnight January 1, 1970 GMT.
4. **public void invalidate():**Invalidates this session then unbinds any objects bound to it.