Can someone explain exactly what the keyword 'this' does in java?

"this" refers to the current object. Take this for example (pun intended):

class Thing {
    int value;
    Thing(int value) {
        this.value = value;
    }
}

So in the code, the constructor takes a parameter which has the same name as an instance variable of the object which is being constructed. So to differentiate, we use the this object, which simply refers to the object that is attached to the current method.