Understanding Critical Path Method:

The critical path method (CPM) is used to estimate the minimum project duration and determine the amount of scheduling flexibility on the logical network paths within the schedule model. This technique will calculate the early and late start dates and the early and late finish dates without regard for resource limitations, by way of a forward (early start and finish dates) and backward (late start and finish dates) pass through the network.

Total float is the amount of time that a schedule activity can be delayed or extended from its early start date without delaying the project finish date. Normally, the CPM critical path has zero float. When implemented with PDM sequencing (remember, this means using precedence diagramming method), critical paths may have positive, negative, or zero float.