

MEAN/MERN STACK

Node.js Http Module

Learning Objectives:

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Basics Server setup
- ▶ Middlewares
- ▶ Types of middleware
- ▶ Application-level middleware
- ▶ Router level / Built-in / Third party middleware
- ▶ Error Handling middleware

Introduction to Express JS

The Express website describes Express as “a minimal and flexible node.js web application framework, providing a robust set of features for building single and multipage and hybrid web applications.” What does that really mean, though? Let’s break that description down:

- **Minimal:** This is one of the most appealing aspects of Express. Many times, framework developers forget that usually “less is more.” The Express philosophy is to provide the minimal layer between your brain and the server. That doesn’t mean that it’s not robust, or that it doesn’t have enough useful features. It means that it gets in your way less, allowing you full expression of your ideas, while at the same time providing something useful.
- **Flexible:** Another key aspect of the Express philosophy is that Express is extensible. Express provides you a very minimal framework, and you can add in different parts of Express functionality as needed, replacing whatever doesn’t meet your needs. This is a breath of fresh air. So many frameworks give you everything, leaving you with a bloated, mysterious, and complex project before you’ve even written a single line of code. Very often, the first task is to waste time carving off unneeded functionality, or replacing the functionality that doesn’t meet requirements. Express takes the opposite approach, allowing you to add what you need when you need it.

Introduction to Express JS

Introduction:

- Express was initially released in November 2010 and is currently on stable version 5.0.0 (2024-09-10).
- Is Express Opinionated?
- Web frameworks often refer to themselves as "opinionated" or "unopinionated".
- Express is unopinionated. You can insert almost any compatible middleware you like into the request handling chain, in almost any order you like. You can structure the app in one file or multiple files, and using any directory structure. You may sometimes feel that you have too many choices!

Introduction to Express JS

5

Introduction:

What does Express code look like?

- In a traditional data-driven website, a web application waits for HTTP requests from the web browser (or other client). When a request is received the application works out what action is needed based on the URL pattern and possibly associated information contained in POST data or GET data. Depending on what is required it may then read or write information from a database or perform other tasks required to satisfy the request. The application will then return a response to the web browser, often dynamically creating an HTML page for the browser to display by inserting the retrieved data into placeholders in an HTML template.
- Express provides methods to specify what function is called for a particular **HTTP verb** (GET, POST, SET, etc.) and **URL pattern** ("Route"), and methods to specify what **template** ("view") engine is used, where template files are located, and what template to use to render a response.

Basic Server Setup

6

- Assuming you've already installed Node.js, create a directory to hold your application, and make that your working directory.

```
$ mkdir myapp  
$ cd myapp
```

- Use the npm init command to create a package.json file for your application. For more information on how package.json works, see [Specifics of npm's package.json handling](#).

```
$ npm init
```

- This command prompts you for a number of things, such as the name and version of your application. For now, you can simply hit RETURN to accept the defaults for most of them, with the following exception:
- entry point: (index.js)
- Enter app.js, or whatever you want the name of the main file to be. If you want it to be index.js, hit RETURN to accept the suggested default file name.
- Now install Express in the myapp directory and save it in the dependencies list. For example:

```
$ npm install express
```

- To install Express temporarily and not add it to the dependencies list:

```
$ npm install express --no-save
```

Introduction to Express JS

- The following sections explain some of the common things you'll see when working with Express and Node code.
- **Helloworld Express**
- First lets' consider the standard Express Hello World example (we discuss each part of this below, and in the following sections).
- If you have Node and Express already installed, you can save this code in a text file called app.js and run it in a bash command prompt by calling:

```
node ./app.js
```

```
const express = require('express');
const app = express();
const port = 3000;

app.get('/', function(req, res) {
  res.send('Hello World!')
});

app.listen(port, function() {
  console.log(`Example app listening on port ${port}!`)
});
```

- The first two lines require() (import) the express module and create an Express application. This object, which is traditionally named app, has methods for routing HTTP requests, configuring middleware, rendering HTML views, registering a template engine, and modifying application settings that control how the application behaves.

Introduction to Express JS

- The middle part of the code (the three lines starting with `app.get`) shows a route definition. The `app.get()` method specifies a callback function that will be invoked whenever there is an HTTP GET request with a path `(/)` relative to the site root. The callback function takes a request and a response object as arguments, and calls `send()` on the response to return the string "Hello World!"
- The final block starts up the server on a specified port (`'3000'`) and prints a log comment to the console. With the server running, you could go to `localhost:3000` in your browser to see the example response returned.
- A module is a JavaScript library/file that you can import into other code using Node's `require()` function. Express itself is a module, as are the middleware and database libraries that we use in our Express applications.
- The code below shows how we import a module by name, using the Express framework as an example. First we invoke the `require()` function, specifying the name of the module as a string (`'express'`), and calling the returned object to create an Express application. We can then access the properties and functions of the application object.

```
const express = require('express');  
const app = express();
```

- You can also create your own modules that can be imported in the same way.
- You will want to create your own modules, because this allows you to organize your code into manageable parts — a monolithic single-file application is hard to understand and maintain. Using modules also helps you manage your namespace, because only the variables you explicitly export are imported when you use a module.
- To make objects available outside of a module you just need to expose them as additional properties on the exports object. For example, the `square.js` module below is a file that exports `area()` and `perimeter()` methods:

```
exports.area = function(width) { return width * width; };  
exports.perimeter = function(width) { return 4 * width; };
```


Introduction to Express JS

- We can import this module using `require()`, and then call the exported method(s) as shown

```
const square = require('./square'); // Here we require() the name of the file without the (optional) .js file extension
console.log('The area of a square with a width of 4 is ' + square.area(4));
```

- If you want to export a complete object in one assignment instead of building it one property at a time, assign it to `module.exports` as shown below (you can also do this to make the root of the exports object a constructor or other function):

```
module.exports = {
  area: function(width) {
    return width * width;
  },

  perimeter: function(width) {
    return 4 * width;
  }
};
```

- You can think of `exports` as a shortcut to `module.exports` within a given module. In fact, `exports` is just a variable that gets initialized to the value of `module.exports` before the module is evaluated. That value is a reference to an object (empty object in this case). This means that `exports` holds a reference to the same object referenced by `module.exports`. It also means that by assigning another value to `exports` it's no longer bound to `module.exports`.

Introduction to Express JS

10

Using asynchronous API

- JavaScript code frequently uses asynchronous rather than synchronous APIs for operations that may take some time to complete. A synchronous API is one in which each operation must complete before the next operation can start. For example, the following log functions are synchronous, and will print the text to the console in order (First, Second).

```
console.log('First');  
console.log('Second');
```

- By contrast, an asynchronous API is one in which the API will start an operation and immediately return (before the operation is complete). Once the operation finishes, the API will use some mechanism to perform additional operations. For example, the code below will print out "Second, First" because even though `setTimeout()` method is called first, and returns immediately, the operation doesn't complete for several seconds.

```
setTimeout(function() {  
  console.log('First');  
}, 3000);  
console.log('Second');
```

- Using non-blocking asynchronous APIs is even more important on Node than in the browser because Node is a single-threaded event-driven execution environment. "Single threaded" means that all requests to the server are run on the same thread (rather than being spawned off into separate processes). This model is extremely efficient in terms of speed and server resources, but it does mean that if any of your functions call synchronous methods that take a long time to complete, they will block not just the current request, but every other request being handled by your web application.
- There are a number of ways for an asynchronous API to notify your application that it has completed. The most common way is to register a callback function when you invoke the asynchronous API, that will be called back when the operation completes. This is the approach used above.

Introduction to Express JS

11

- Using callbacks can be quite "messy" if you have a sequence of dependent asynchronous operations that must be performed in order because this results in multiple levels of nested callbacks. This problem is commonly known as "callback hell". This problem can be reduced by good coding practices (see <http://callbackhell.com/>), using a module like [async](#), or even moving to ES6 features like [Promises](#).
- A common convention for Node and Express is to use error-first callbacks. In this convention, the first value in your callback functions is an error value, while subsequent arguments contain success data. There is a good explanation of why this approach is useful in this blog: [The Node.js Way - Understanding Error-First Callbacks](#).

Creating route handlers

- In our Hello World Express example (see above), we defined a (callback) route handler function for HTTP GET requests to the site root ('/').

```
app.get('/', function(req, res) {  
  res.send('Hello World!')  
});
```

- The callback function takes a request and a response object as arguments. In this case, the method calls [send\(\)](#) on the response to return the string "Hello World!" There are a [number of other response methods](#) for ending the request/response cycle, for example, you could call [res.json\(\)](#) to send a JSON response or [res.sendFile\(\)](#) to send a file.
- You can use any argument names you like in the callback functions; when the callback is invoked the first argument will always be the request and the second will always be the response. It makes sense to name them such that you can identify the object you're working with in the body of the callback.

Introduction to Express JS

12

- The Express application object also provides methods to define route handlers for all the other HTTP verbs, which are mostly used in exactly the same way:
- `checkout()`, `copy()`, `delete()`, `get()`, `head()`, `lock()`, `merge()`, `mkactivity()`, `mkcol()`, `move()`, `m-search()`, `notify()`, `options()`, `patch()`, `post()`, `purge()`, `put()`, `report()`, `search()`, `subscribe()`, `trace()`, `unlock()`, `unsubscribe()`.
- There is a special routing method, `app.all()`, which will be called in response to any HTTP method. This is used for loading middleware functions at a particular path for all request methods. The following example (from the Express documentation) shows a handler that will be executed for requests to `/secret` irrespective of the HTTP verb used (provided it is supported by the [http module](#)).

```
app.all('/secret', function(req, res, next) {  
  console.log('Accessing the secret section ...');  
  next(); // pass control to the next handler  
});
```

- Routes allow you to match particular patterns of characters in a URL, and extract some values from the URL and pass them as parameters to the route handler (as attributes of the request object passed as a parameter).
- Often it is useful to group route handlers for a particular part of a site together and access them using a common route-prefix (e.g. a site with a Wiki might have all wiki-related routes in one file and have them accessed with a route prefix of `/wiki/`). In Express this is achieved by using the [express.Router](#) object. For example, we can create our wiki route in a module named `wiki.js`, and then export the Router object, as shown below:

```
// wiki.js - Wiki route module  
  
const express = require('express');  
const router = express.Router();  
  
// Home page route  
router.get('/', function(req, res) {  
  res.send('Wiki home page');  
});  
  
// About page route  
router.get('/about', function(req, res) {  
  res.send('About this wiki');  
});  
  
module.exports = router;
```

Introduction to Express JS

13

- Adding routes to the Router object is just like adding routes to the app object (as shown previously).
- To use the router in our main app file we would then `require()` the route module (`wiki.js`), then call `use()` on the Express application to add the Router to the middleware handling path. The two routes will then be accessible from `/wiki/` and `/wiki/about/`

```
const wiki = require('./wiki.js');  
// ...  
app.use('/wiki', wiki);
```

Middleware

- Conceptually, middleware is a way to encapsulate functionality: specifically, functionality that operates on an HTTP request to your application. Practically, a middleware is simply a function that takes three arguments: a request object, a response object, and a “next” function, which will be explained shortly.
- Middleware is executed in what’s known as a pipeline. You can imagine a physical pipe, carrying water. The water gets pumped in at one end, and then there are gauges and valves before the water gets where it’s going. The important part about this analogy is that order matters: if you put a pressure gauge before a valve, it has a different effect than if you put the pressure gauge after the valve.
- Similarly, if you have a valve that injects something into the water, everything “downstream” from that valve will contain the added ingredient. In an Express app, you insert middleware into the pipeline by calling `app.use`.
- Middleware is used extensively in Express apps, for tasks from serving static files to error handling, to compressing HTTP responses. Whereas route functions end the HTTP request-response cycle by returning some response to the HTTP client, middleware functions typically perform some operation on the request or response and then call the next function in the “stack”, which might be more middleware or a route handler. The order in which middleware is called is up to the app developer.
- The middleware can perform any operation, execute any code, make changes to the request and response object, and it can also end the request-response cycle. If it does not end the cycle then it must call `next()` to pass control to the next middleware function (or the request will be left hanging).

Introduction to Express JS

14

- In Express 5.0, middleware and route handlers are invoked in the order in which they were linked in, making it much clearer what the sequence is.
- It's common practice to have the very last middleware in your pipeline be a "catch all" handler for any request that doesn't match any other routes. This middleware usually returns a status code of 404 (Not Found).
- So how is a request "terminated" in the pipeline? That's what the next function passed to each middleware does: if you don't call next(), the request terminates with that middleware.
- Learning how to think flexibly about middleware and route handlers is key to understanding how Express works. Here are the things you should keep in mind:
 - Route handlers (app.get, app.post, etc.—often referred to collectively as app.VERB) can be thought of as middleware that handle only a specific HTTP verb (GET, POST, etc.). Conversely, middleware can be thought of as a route handler that handles all HTTP verbs (this is essentially equivalent to app.all, which handles any HTTP verb).
 - Route handlers require a path as their first parameter. If you want that path to match any route, simply use /. Middleware can also take a path as its first parameter, but it is optional (if it is omitted, it will match any path, as if you had specified /*).
 - Route handlers and middleware take a callback function that takes two, three, or four parameters (technically, you could also have zero or one parameters, but there is no sensible use for these forms). If there are two or three parameters, the first two parameters are the request and response objects, and the third parameter is the next function. If there are four parameters, it becomes an error-handling middle-ware.
 - If you don't call next(), the pipeline will be terminated, and no more route handlers or middleware will be processed. If you don't call next(), you should send a response to the client (res.send, res.json, res.render, etc.); if you don't, the client will hang and eventually time out.

Introduction to Express JS

15

- If you do call `next()`, it's generally inadvisable to send a response to the client. If you do, middleware or route handlers further down the pipeline will be executed, but any client responses they send will be ignored.

```
app.use(function(req, res, next){
  console.log('processing request for ' + req.url + '....');
  next();
});

app.use(function(req, res, next){
  console.log('terminating request');
  res.send('thanks for playing!');
  // note that we do NOT call next() here...this terminates the request
});

app.use(function(req, res, next){
  console.log('whoops, i\'ll never get called!');
});
```

- Here we have three middlewares. The first one simply logs a message to the console before passing on the request to the next middleware in the pipeline by calling `next()`. Then the next middleware actually handles the request. Note that if we omitted the `res.send` here, no response would ever be returned to the client. Eventually the client would time out. The last middleware will never execute, because all requests are terminated in the prior middleware.

```

var app = require('express')();

app.use(function(req, res, next)
{
  console.log('\n\nALLWAYS');
  next();
});

app.get('/a', function(req, res)
{
  console.log('/a: route terminated');
  res.send('a');
});

app.get('/a', function(req, res)
{
  console.log('/a: never called');
});

app.get('/b', function(req, res, next)
{
  console.log('/b: route not terminated');
  next();
});

app.use(function(req, res, next)
{
  console.log('SOMETIMES');
  next();
});

app.get('/b', function(req, res, next)
{
  console.log('/b (part 2): error thrown ');
  throw new Error('b failed');
});

app.use('/b', function(err, req, res, next)
{
  console.log('/b error detected and passed on');
  next(err);
});

```

```

});

app.get('/c', function(err, req)
{
  console.log('/c: error thrown');
  throw new Error('c failed');
});

app.use('/c', function(err, req, res, next)
{
  console.log('/c: error detected but not passed on');
  next();
});

app.use(function(err, req, res, next)
{
  console.log('unhandled error detected: ' + err.message);
  res.send('500 - server error');
});

app.use(function(req, res)
{
  console.log('route not handled');
  res.send('404 - not found');
});

app.listen(3000, function()
{
  console.log('listening on 3000');
});

```

Introduction to Express JS

17

Types of middleware

- Middleware functions in Express are of the following types:
 - Application-level middleware
 - runs for all routes in an app object
 - Router-level middleware
 - runs for all routes in a router object
 - Error-handling middleware
 - for handling errors
 - Built-in middleware
 - provided by Express like `express.static`, `express.json`, `express.urlencoded`
 - Third-party middleware
 - maintained by the community
- You can load application-level and router-level middleware with an optional mount path. You can also load a series of middleware functions together, which creates a sub-stack of the middleware system at a mount point.

Application-level middleware

- Bind application-level middleware to an instance of the app object by using the `app.use()` and `app.METHOD()` functions, where `METHOD` is the HTTP method of the request that the middleware function handles (such as `GET`, `PUT`, or `POST`) in lowercase.
- This example shows a middleware function with no mount path. The function is executed every time the app receives a request.

Introduction to Express JS

18

```
const express = require('express')
const app = express()

app.use((req, res, next) => {
  console.log('Time:', Date.now())
  next()
})
```

- This example shows a middleware function mounted on the `/user/:id` path. The function is executed for any type of HTTP request on the `/user/:id` path.

```
app.use('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  console.log('Request Type:', req.method)
  next()
})
```

- This example shows a route and its handler function (middleware system). The function handles GET requests to the `/user/:id` path.

```
app.get('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  res.send('USER')
})
```


Introduction to Express JS

19

- Here is an example of loading a series of middleware functions at a mount point, with a mount path. It illustrates a middleware sub-stack that prints request info for any type of HTTP request to the /user/:id path.

```
app.use('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  console.log('Request URL:', req.originalUrl)
  next()
}, (req, res, next) => {
  console.log('Request Type:', req.method)
  next()
})
```

- Route handlers enable you to define multiple routes for a path. The example below defines two routes for GET requests to the /user/:id path. The second route will not cause any problems, but it will never get called because the first route ends the request-response cycle.
- This example shows a middleware sub-stack that handles GET requests to the /user/:id path.

```
app.get('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  console.log('ID:', req.params.id)
  next()
}, (req, res, next) => {
  res.send('User Info')
})

// handler for the /user/:id path, which prints the user ID
app.get('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  res.send(req.params.id)
})
```

Introduction to Express JS

20

- To skip the rest of the middleware functions from a router middleware stack, call `next('route')` to pass control to the next route.
- NOTE: `next('route')` will work only in middleware functions that were loaded by using the `app.METHOD()` or `router.METHOD()` functions.
- This example shows a middleware sub-stack that handles GET requests to the `/user/:id` path.

```
app.get('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {  
  // if the user ID is 0, skip to the next route  
  if (req.params.id === '0') next('route')  
  // otherwise pass the control to the next middleware function in this stack  
  else next()  
}, (req, res, next) => {  
  // send a regular response  
  res.send('regular')  
})  
  
// handler for the /user/:id path, which sends a special response  
app.get('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {  
  res.send('special')  
})
```

Introduction to Express JS

21

Router-level middleware

- Router-level middleware works in the same way as application-level middleware, except it is bound to an instance of `express.Router()`.

```
const router = express.Router()
```

- Load router-level middleware by using the `router.use()` and `router.METHOD()` functions.
- The following example code replicates the middleware system that is shown above for application-level middleware, by using router-level middleware:

Introduction to Express JS

22

```
const express = require('express')
const app = express()
const router = express.Router()

// a middleware function with no mount path. This code is executed for every request to the router
router.use((req, res, next) => {
  console.log('Time:', Date.now())
  next()
})

// a middleware sub-stack shows request info for any type of HTTP request to the /user/:id path
router.use('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  console.log('Request URL:', req.originalUrl)
  next()
}, (req, res, next) => {
  console.log('Request Type:', req.method)
  next()
})

// a middleware sub-stack that handles GET requests to the /user/:id path
router.get('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  // if the user ID is 0, skip to the next router
  if (req.params.id === '0') next('route')
  // otherwise pass control to the next middleware function in this stack
  else next()
})
```

```
}, (req, res, next) => {
  // render a regular page
  res.render('regular')
})

// handler for the /user/:id path, which renders a special page
router.get('/user/:id', (req, res, next) => {
  console.log(req.params.id)
  res.render('special')
})

// mount the router on the app
app.use('/', router)
```

Introduction to Express JS

23

- To skip the rest of the router's middleware functions, call `next('router')` to pass control back out of the router instance.
- This example shows a middleware sub-stack that handles GET requests to the `/user/:id` path.

```
const express = require('express')
const app = express()
const router = express.Router()

// predicate the router with a check and bail out when needed
router.use((req, res, next) => {
  if (!req.headers['x-auth']) return next('router')
  next()
})

router.get('/user/:id', (req, res) => {
  res.send('hello, user!')
})

// use the router and 401 anything falling through
app.use('/admin', router, (req, res) => {
  res.sendStatus(401)
})
```


Introduction to Express JS

24

Built-in middleware

- Built-in middleware functions are bundled with Express so we do not need to install any additional modules for using them.
- Express provides the following Built-in middleware functions:

Function	Description
<code>express.static</code>	serves static assets
<code>express.json</code>	parses JSON payloads
<code>express.urlencoded</code>	parses URL-encoded payloads
<code>express.raw</code>	parses payloads into a Buffer and makes them available under <code>req.body</code>
<code>express.text</code>	parses payloads into a string

Introduction to Express JS

25

- Let us see some examples of their use.
- **Using `express.static` for Serving Static Assets**
- We use the `express.static` built-in middleware function to serve static files such as images, CSS files, and JavaScript files. Here is an example of using `express.static` to serve our HTML and image files:

```
const express = require('express');

const app = express();
app.use(express.static('images'))
app.use(express.static('htmls'))

app.get('product', (request, response)=>{
  response.sendFile("productsample.html")
})
```

- Here we have defined two static paths named `images` and `htmls` to represent two folders of the same name in our root directory. We have also defined multiple static assets directories by calling the `express.static()` middleware function multiple times.
- Our root directory structure looks like this:

```
.
├── htmls
│   └── productsample.html
├── images
│   └── sample.jpg
├── index.js
└── node_modules
```

Introduction to Express JS

26

- Express looks for the files in the order in which we set the static directories with the `express.static` middleware function.
- In our example, we have defined the `images` directory before `htmls`. So Express will look for the file: `productsample.html` in the `images` directory first. If the file is not found in the `images` directory, Express looks for the file in the `htmls` directory.
- Next we have defined a route with url `product` to serve the static HTML file `productsample.html`. The HTML file contains an image referred only with the image name `sample.jpg`:

```
<html>
<body>
  <h2>My sample product page</h2>
  </img>
</body>
</html>
```

- Express looks up the files relative to the static directory, so the name of the static directory is not part of the URL.
- **Using `express.json` for Parsing JSON Payloads**
- We use the `express.json` built-in middleware function to JSON content received from the incoming requests.
- Let us suppose the route with URL `/products` in our Express application accepts product data from the request object in JSON format. So we will use Express' built-in middleware `express.json` for parsing the incoming JSON payload and attach it to our router object as shown in this code snippet:

```
.const express = require('express');

const app = express();

// Attach the express.json middleware to route "/products"
app.use('/products', express.json({ limit: 100 })))

// handle post request for path /products
app.post('/products', (request, response) => {
  ...
  ...
  response.json(...)
})
```

Introduction to Express JS

27

- Here we are attaching the `express.json` middleware by calling the `use()` function on the `app` object. We have also configured a maximum size of 100 bytes for the JSON request.
- We have used a slightly different signature of the `use()` function than the signature of the function used before. The `use()` function invoked on the `app` object here takes the URL of the route: `/products` to which the middleware function will get attached, as the first parameter. Due to this, this middleware function will be called only for this route.
- Now we can extract the fields from the JSON payload sent in the request body as shown in this route definition:

```
const express = require('express')

const app = express()

// Attach the express.json middleware to route "/products"
app.use('/products', express.json({ limit: 100 }))

// handle post request for path /products
app.post('/products', (request, response) => {
  const products = []

  // sample JSON request
  // {"name":"furniture", "brand":"century", "price":1067.67}

  // JSON payload is parsed to extract the fields name, brand, and category

  // Extract name of product
  const name = request.body.name

  // Extract brand of product
  const brand = request.body.brand

  // Extract category of product
  const category = request.body.category

  console.log(name + " " + brand + " " + category)

  ...
  response.json(...)
})
```

Introduction to Express JS

28

- Here we are extracting the contents of the JSON request by calling `request.body.FIELD_NAME` before using those fields for adding a new product.
- Similarly we can use express' built-in middleware `express.urlencoded()` to process URL encoded fields submitted through a HTTP form object:

```
app.use(express.urlencoded({ extended: false }));
```

- Then we can use the same code for extracting the fields as we had used before for extracting the fields from a JSON payload.

Third-party middleware

- We can also use third-party middleware to add functionality built by the community to our Express applications. These are usually available as npm modules which we install by running the `npm install` command in our terminal window.
- The following example illustrates installing and loading a third-party middleware named Morgan which is an HTTP request logging middleware for Node.js.

```
npm install morgan
```

- After installing the module containing the third-party middleware, we need to load the middleware function in our Express application as shown below:

```
const express = require('express')
const morgan = require('morgan')

const app = express()

app.use(morgan('tiny'))
```

- Here we are loading the middleware function `morgan` by calling `require()` and then attaching the function to our routes with the `use()` method of the `app` instance.
- Let us see another example of third-party middleware.
- The following example illustrates installing and loading the cookie-parsing middleware function `cookie-parser`.

Introduction to Express JS

29

```
npm install cookie-parser

const express = require('express')
const app = express()
const cookieParser = require('cookie-parser')

// load the cookie-parsing middleware
app.use(cookieParser())
```

- For a partial list of third-party middleware functions that are commonly used with Express, see: [Third-party middleware](#).

Error handling middleware

- Express comes with a default error handler that takes care of any errors that might be encountered in the application. The default error handler is added as a middleware function at the end of the middleware function stack.
- We can change this default error handling behavior by adding a custom error handler which is a middleware function that takes an error parameter in addition to the parameters: request, response, and the next() function. The error handling middleware functions are attached after the route definitions.
- The basic signature of an error-handling middleware function in Express looks like this:

```
function customErrorHandler(error, request, response, next) {

  // Error handling middleware functionality
}
```

- Error-handling middleware always takes four arguments. You must provide four arguments to identify it as an error-handling middleware function. Even if you don't need to use the next object, you must specify it to maintain the signature. Otherwise, the next object will be interpreted as regular middleware and will fail to handle errors.
- When we want to call an error-handling middleware, we pass on the error object by calling the next() function with the error argument like this

```
const errorLogger = (error, request, response, next) => {
  console.log(`error ${err.message}`)
  next(error) // calling next middleware
}
```

Introduction to Express JS

30

- Let us define three middleware error handling functions and add them to our routes. We have also added a new route that will throw an error as shown below:

```
// Error handling Middleware functions
const errorLogger = (error, request, response, next) => {
  console.log( `error ${error.message}` )
  next(error) // calling next middleware
}

const errorResponder = (error, request, response, next) => {
  response.header("Content-Type", 'application/json')

  const status = error.status || 400
  response.status(status).send(error.message)
}

const invalidPathHandler = (request, response, next) => {
  response.status(400)
  response.send('invalid path')
}

app.get('product', (request, response)=>{
  response.sendFile("productsample.html")
})

// handle get request for path /
app.get('/', (request, response) => {
  response.send('response for GET request');
})
```

```
app.get('/productswitherror', (request,
response) => {
  let error = new Error(`processing error in
request at ${request.url}`)
  error.statusCode = 400
  throw error
})

app.use(errorLogger)
app.use(errorResponder)
app.use(invalidPathHandler)
app.listen(PORT, () => {
  console.log(`Server listening at
http://localhost:${PORT}`)
})
```

- These middleware error handling functions perform different tasks: `errorLogger` logs the error message, `errorResponder` sends the error response to the client, and `invalidPathHandler` responds with a message for invalid path when a non-existing route is requested.
- We have next attached these three middleware functions for handling errors to the app object by calling the `use()` method after the route definitions.
- To test how our application handles errors with the help of these error handling functions, let us invoke the route with URL: `localhost:3000/productswitherror`.
- Now instead of the default error handler, the first two error handlers get triggered. The first one logs the error message to the console and the second one sends the error message in the response.
- When we request a non-existent route, the third error handler is invoked giving us an error message: invalid path.
- For details about error-handling middleware, see: [Error handling](#)

Questions?