Serving static files in Express

To serve static files such as images, CSS files, and JavaScript files, use the `express.static` built-in middleware function in Express.

Pass the name of the directory that contains the static assets to the `express.static` middleware function to start serving the files directly. For example, use the following code to serve images, CSS files, and JavaScript files in a directory named `public`:

```
app.use(express.static('public'))
```

Now, you can load the files that are in the `public` directory:

```
http://localhost:3000/images/kitten.jpg
http://localhost:3000/css/style.css
http://localhost:3000/js/app.js
http://localhost:3000/images/bg.png
http://localhost:3000/hello.html
```

> Express looks up the files relative to the static directory, so the name of the static directory is not part of the URL.

To use multiple static assets directories, call the `express.static` middleware function multiple times:

```
app.use(express.static('public'))
app.use(express.static('files'))
```

Express looks up the files in the order in which you set the static directories with the `express.static` middleware function.

To create a virtual path prefix (where the path does not actually exist in the file system) for files that are served by the `express.static` function, specify a mount path for the static directory, as shown below:

```
app.use('/static', express.static('public'))
```

Now, you can load the files that are in the `public` directory from the `/static` path prefix.

```
http://localhost:3000/static/images/kitten.jpg
http://localhost:3000/static/css/style.css
http://localhost:3000/static/js/app.js
http://localhost:3000/static/images/bg.png
http://localhost:3000/static/hello.html
```

However, the path that you provide to the `express.static` function is relative to the directory from where you launch your `node` process. If you run the express app from another directory, it's safer to use the absolute path of the directory that you want to serve:

```
app.use('/static', express.static(path.join(__dirname, 'public')))
```

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