

1. URL (file.path)

This is the direct link to your uploaded image (e.g., <https://res.cloudinary.com/demo/image/upload/v12345/abc.png>). You can use it in your frontend to display the image.

But Cloudinary cannot identify or manage the file just from the URL — because the URL changes when you apply transformations or rename the file.

2. Public ID (file.filename / custom id)

This is the unique identifier Cloudinary assigns to each uploaded file (e.g., "abc123xyz").

You use public_id for management operations:

- Deleting an image
- Updating/replacing an image
- Transformations (e.g., resize, crop, compress, watermark)

Example:

```
cloudinary.uploader.destroy(public_id)
```

This will delete the file, no matter what URL versions exist for it.

Why not just use URL?

If you only store the URL, you cannot delete/modify the file from Cloudinary. The URL is only for access, not for management.

If you want to remove old images when a mentor/book/user is deleted, you need the public_id.

■ Best practice:

Save both in DB:

```
{  
url: file.path,  
public_id: file.filename  
}
```

- Use url to display images.
- Use public_id when you need to delete/update from Cloudinary.