UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC

How to Check: a Study Brief

Verification, integrity and trust in a Nation's documents.

Learning outcomes

By the end, a student will be able to	Level (Bloom)
Describe the Record Code and the four standings	Remember
Explain digital signatures and timestamping	Understand
Analyse the three checks as layers of assurance	Analyze
Compare the Nation's system with government document verification	Analyze
Evaluate its strengths and weaknesses	Evaluate

Overview

Every document carries one Record Code in three blocks; its standing is held only on the Register. Three checks match three levels of reliance: the code at /verify/, the Edge Mark at /edge-scan/ (signatures checked against the signer's key), and the Ledger at /ledger/, anchored in Bitcoin and checkable with OpenTimestamps. The proof travels with the paper.

Primary sources

The Nation's Conventions

"one scheme for everything: every record of the Nation has one Record Code and no other number"

How to Check a Document of the Nation

"the paper cannot know"

OpenTimestamps

"a standard for anchoring timestamps in Bitcoin"

Three readings

	Governments	Security researchers	The Mohawk Nation of Grand River
Checking	Through the issuing office	By cryptographic proof	By anyone, in a minute
Standing	Held by the state	A live status service	Held only on the Register
Assurance	Institutional trust	Verifiable trust	Layered: code, Edge Mark, Ledger

Historiography

Document security has moved from seals and watermarks to databases and cryptography. The Nation's design publishes verification to anyone, so trust need not rest on the Nation's say-so.

Discussion questions

1. Why is a document's look never enough?

2. What does a digital signature prove, and what not?

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3. Why anchor a ledger in a public blockchain?

4. What are the privacy risks of open verification?

5. How should reliance determine how far one checks?

6. **Apply.** Write the instructions for a court clerk checking a Nation certificate.

Further reading

In Chicago style (17th ed.), bibliography form.

Mohawk Nation of Grand River. *The Verifier's Handbook*. National Books. Grand River Territory, Ohsweken: Mohawk's Printer for Grand River, 2026.

Haber, Stuart, and W. Scott Stornetta. "How to Time-Stamp a Digital Document." *Journal of Cryptology* 3, no. 2 (1991): 99–111.

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Assignment brief

Choose one prompt

A	In 1,500 words, evaluate the Nation’s verification system against government practice. Use at least three sources.
B	Why anchor a ledger in a public blockchain? Answer in an argued essay.
C	Apply. Write the instructions for a court clerk checking a Nation certificate. Write it as an argued essay that applies the readings.

Requirements

- An argument: a thesis stated in the first paragraph and defended throughout.
- At least three primary sources from the list below, quoted precisely and read in their context.
- At least two secondary sources, one of them from outside the Nation’s own books.
- The strongest objection to your thesis, stated fairly, and your answer to it.
- Footnotes and a bibliography in Chicago style (17th ed.).
- 1,500 words, 10 per cent either way, not counting notes and bibliography.

Sources you must use

- The Nation’s Conventions
- How to Check a Document of the Nation
- OpenTimestamps

A suggested structure

- Introduction: the question, why it matters, and your thesis.
- Context: the instruments and events, briefly, in order.
- Analysis: the sources, read closely, one claim at a time.
- The objection: the best case against you, and your reply.
- Conclusion: what follows, and what remains open.

Timeline

- Week 1: choose a prompt; read the primary sources; write a one-paragraph proposal.
- Week 2: research the secondary sources; draft an outline with your thesis and the objection.
- Week 3: write the full draft; exchange with a peer for written comments.
- Week 4: revise and submit.

Format and submission

Twelve-point type, double-spaced, page numbers, your name and the prompt on the first page. Submit as your instructor directs; this sheet can also be filled in online for the discussion questions.

Integrity

Your work must be your own. Quote and cite every source. If you use an AI tool for any part of the work, say which and how, in a note at the end.

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For the instructor: standards met

Universal competencies	Identify key facts and claims; Understand perspective and point of view; Analyse and evaluate evidence; Apply: what does this mean for us?. The same everywhere, whatever the curriculum.
Learning outcomes	Five outcomes with Bloom’s verbs, each matched to an activity.
Reconciliation	TRC Calls to Action 62 and 63.
Rights in education	UNDRIP arts. 14 and 15; art. 33 on identity and membership.
Primary-source practice	Each standard and source quoted and attributed.
Citation	Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition.
Balance	Three readings side by side; the brief names its own position.
Time	One seminar of about two hours; the assignment over four weeks.

Assessment: the assignment

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Needs work
Use of sources	Three or more primary sources, quoted precisely and read in context	Three, quoted accurately	Fewer, or quoted loosely	Missing or misread
Analysis	Weighs the readings against the documents and shows what turns on the difference	Compares the readings clearly	Describes them	Restates one
Argument	A clear judgment that answers the strongest objection	A clear, supported judgment	Thinly supported	No clear judgment
Writing and citation	Precise; Chicago style throughout	Clear; minor slips	Some unclear passages	Hard to follow

This brief states the Mohawk Nation of Grand River’s position alongside others. It is for study, not legal advice.

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