

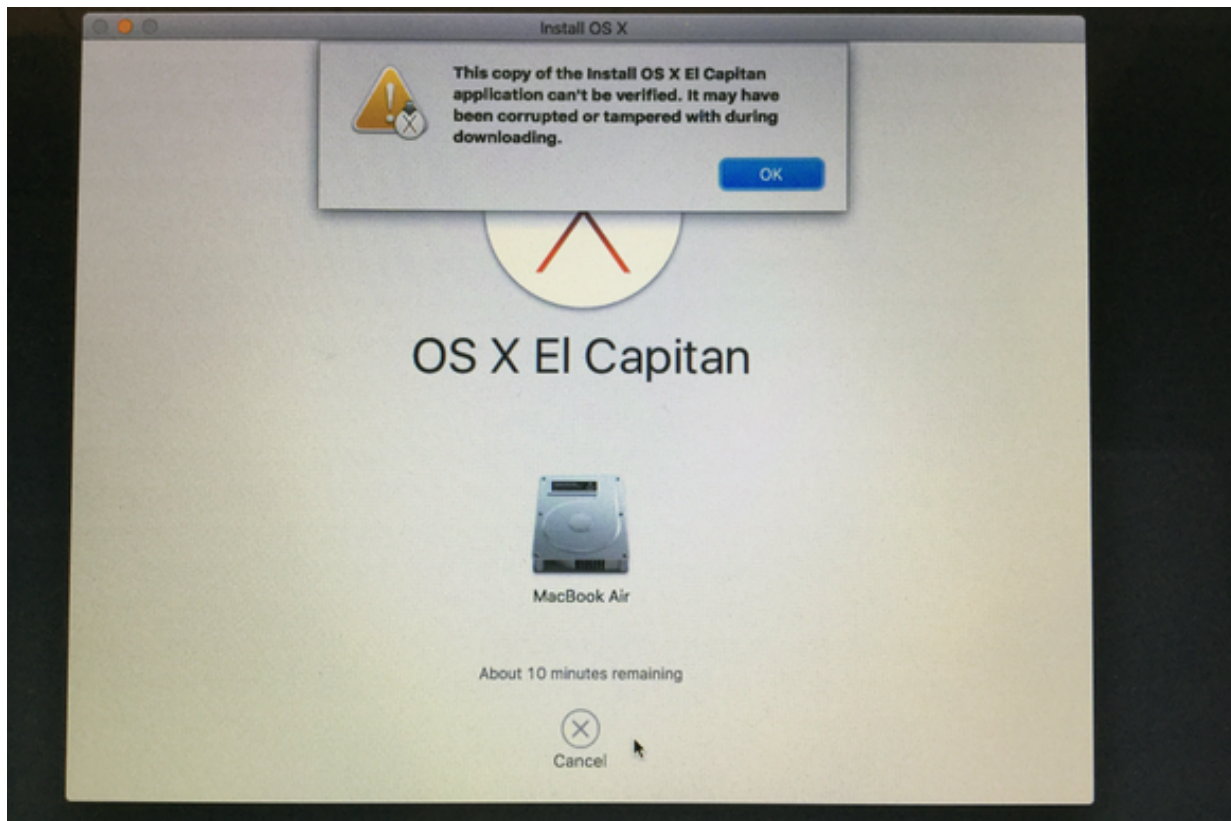
macOS 12

When the Installer can't be verified

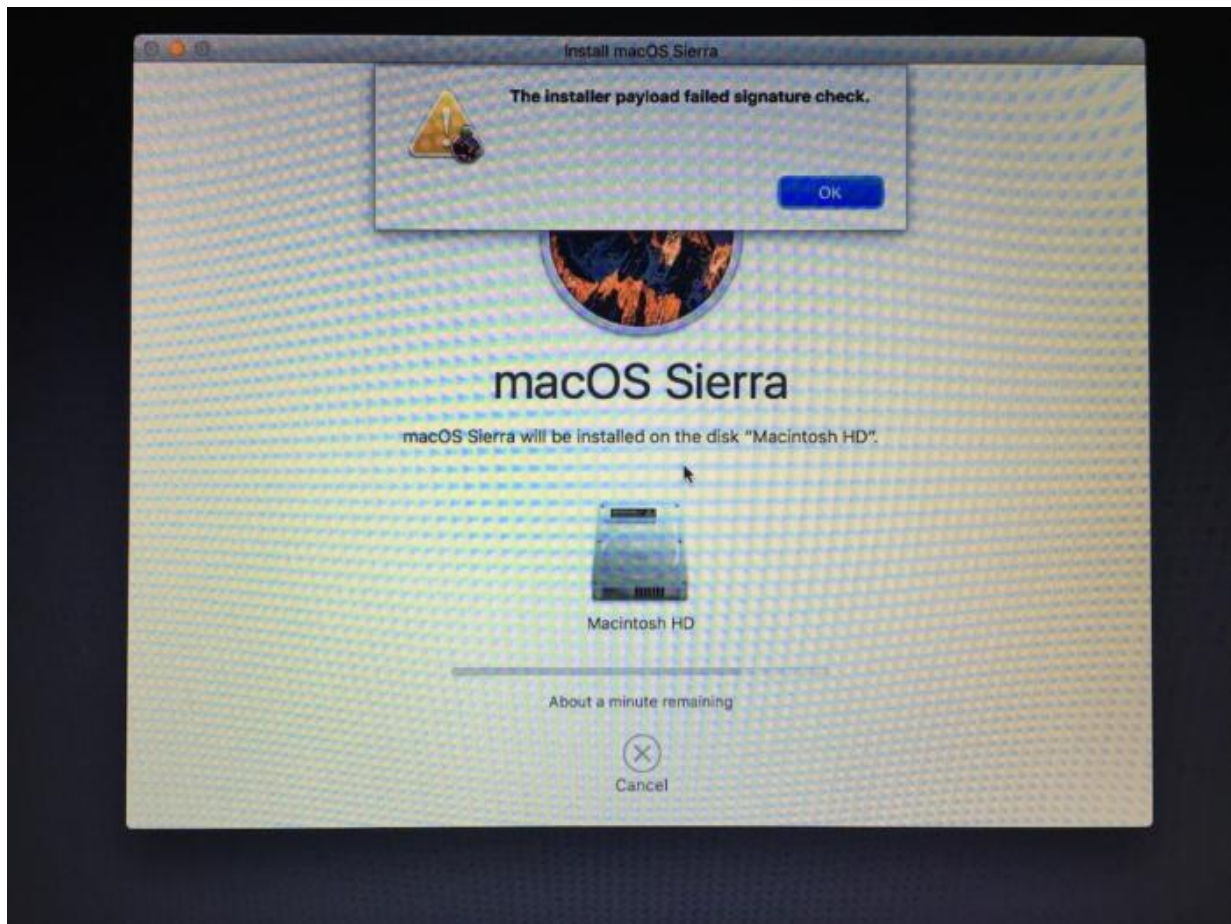
What to do when 'the installer payload failed signature check' or 'this copy of the install OS X application cannot be verified'

The other day a co-worker needed to borrow a Mac, so I grabbed an older MacBook Air from storage. I decided to wipe out the laptop's flash storage and install a fresh version of OS X. I [created a bootable USB flash drive installer](#), plugged it into the laptop, pressed the Option key as the machine booted, and then selected the USB drive as the boot disk.

I then ran Disk Utility to reformat the drive and then ran the installer to install OS X. It looked like things were moving along, until this appeared on the screen.



Error message while trying to install OS X El Capitan from a USB installation disk.



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Error message while trying to install macOS Sierra from a USB installation disk.

I created another boot disk using a different storage drive, in case it was a hardware problem, but I got the same error. I figured that the fact that the laptop had been in storage for a while had something to do with it, and it did.

Note: This fix should work with OS X Mavericks and El Capitan. It also worked for me with macOS Sierra, which shows a different error message ("The installer payload failed signature check" pops up near the end of the installation) than the one that appears for El Capitan and Mavericks.

How to fix the problem

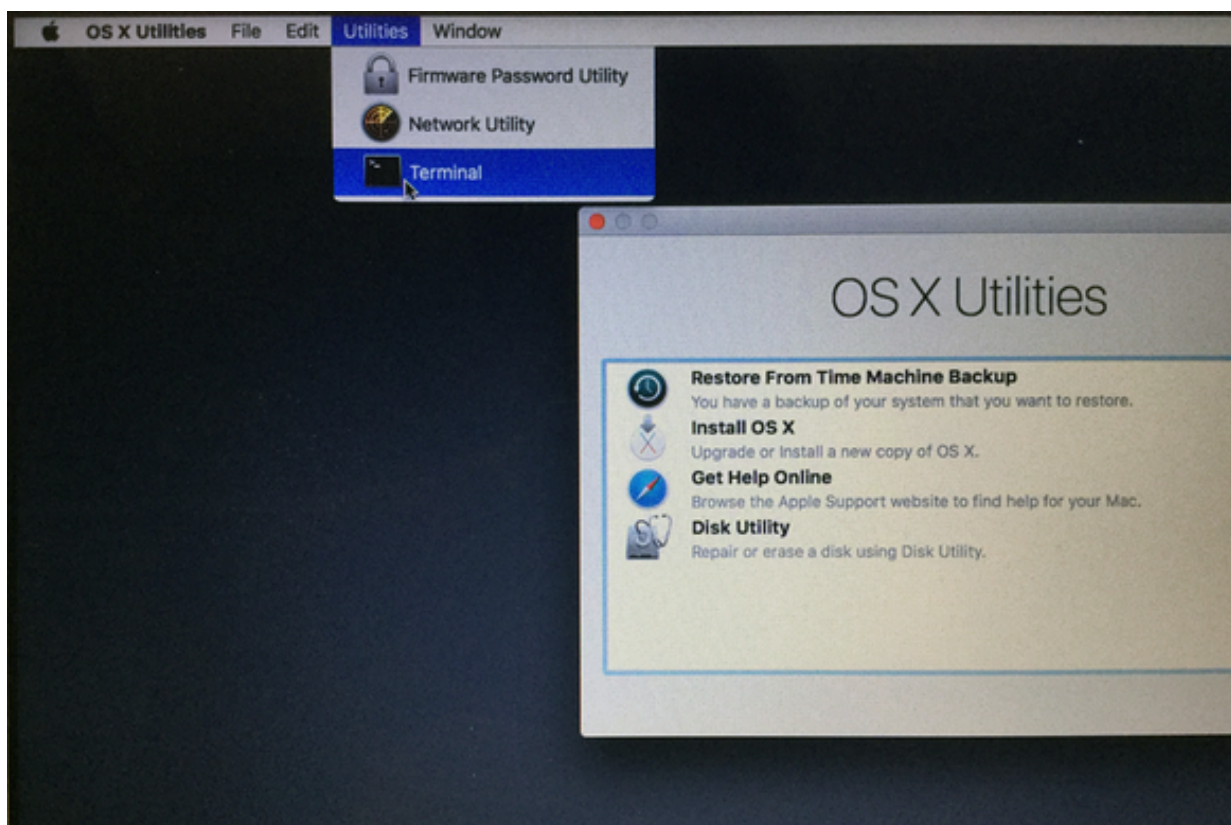
The installer checks the date on the computer. If the date isn't current, you get the error above. The fix involves correcting the date on your Mac.

If you have an older OS on the Mac

If you have a complete OS on the Mac already, boot into it. Fix the date in the Date & Time system preference (*Apple menu > System Preferences*). Reboot using the USB boot disk, and you should be able to proceed with the installation.

If you don't have an OS on the Mac

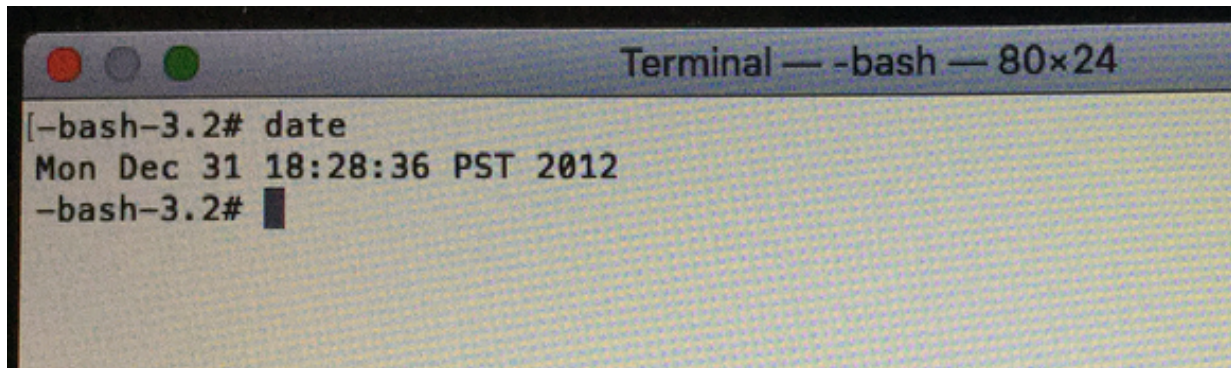
If you are in a situation like I was, and you don't have a complete OS on your disk (you reformatted it), you'll find that there's no way to access the Date & Time system preference when you use an external USB boot installer drive. The Apple menu doesn't give you access to System Preferences. You have to use the Terminal to set the date and time.



How to access the Terminal when you boot from an external boot drive installer.

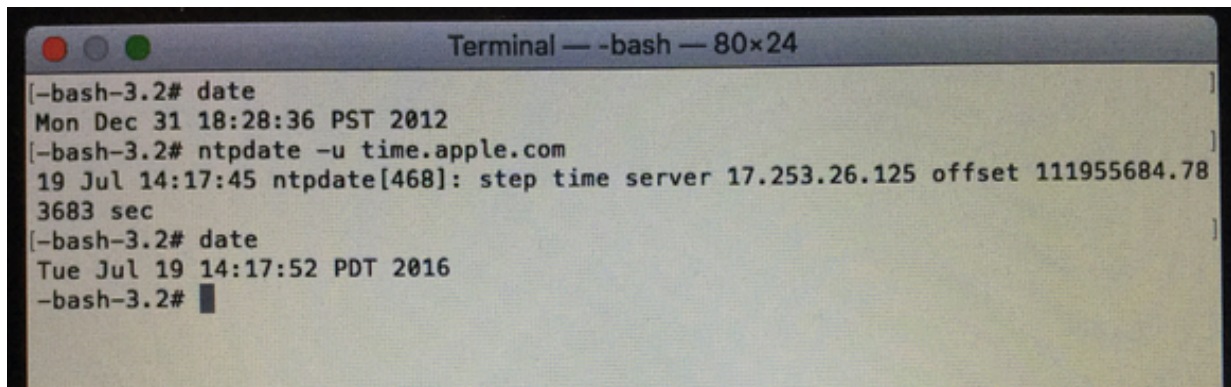
If you use an external boot disk, your Mac starts up into OS X Disk Utilities. You can access the Terminal by clicking on the Utilities menu and selecting Terminal. Once the Terminal has launched, follow these steps.

1. At the prompt, type `date` to see the date that's on the Mac. For example, here's the date of the MacBook Air I worked on.

A screenshot of a macOS Terminal window. The title bar reads "Terminal — -bash — 80x24". The terminal text shows the command `date` being entered at the prompt `[-bash-3.2#`, followed by the output `Mon Dec 31 18:28:36 PST 2012`. The prompt `[-bash-3.2#` is shown again with a cursor.

```
Terminal — -bash — 80x24
[-bash-3.2# date
Mon Dec 31 18:28:36 PST 2012
[-bash-3.2#
```

1. If your Mac is connected to the internet, you can tell your Mac to check online for the current date and time. You can do this by typing at the prompt `ntpdate -u time.apple.com` and then pressing Return.

A screenshot of a macOS Terminal window. The title bar reads "Terminal — -bash — 80x24". The terminal text shows the command `date` being entered at the prompt `[-bash-3.2#`, followed by the output `Mon Dec 31 18:28:36 PST 2012`. Then, the command `ntpdate -u time.apple.com` is entered, followed by the output `19 Jul 14:17:45 ntpdate[468]: step time server 17.253.26.125 offset 111955684.783683 sec`. Finally, the command `date` is entered again, followed by the output `Tue Jul 19 14:17:52 PDT 2016`. The prompt `[-bash-3.2#` is shown again with a cursor.

```
Terminal — -bash — 80x24
[-bash-3.2# date
Mon Dec 31 18:28:36 PST 2012
[-bash-3.2# ntpdate -u time.apple.com
19 Jul 14:17:45 ntpdate[468]: step time server 17.253.26.125 offset 111955684.783683 sec
[-bash-3.2# date
Tue Jul 19 14:17:52 PDT 2016
[-bash-3.2#
```

Your Mac should now have the current date and time. If you enter `date` again (as I did in the screenshot above) the information that appears will be current. You can now run the OS installer.

If you don't have an internet connection

You can still use Terminal to set the date. Go into the Terminal as described above, then follow these steps.

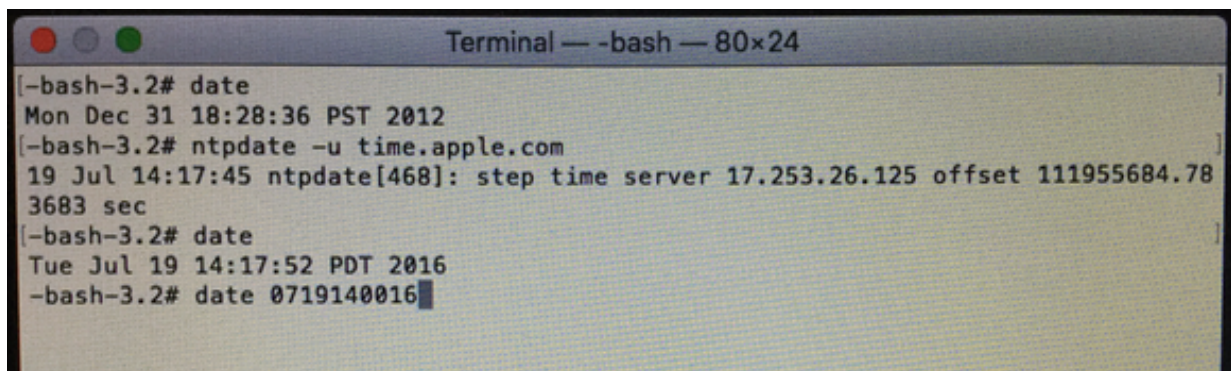
1. At the prompt, type `date` to see the date that's on the Mac.
2. Figure out the numerical representation of the date and time. The

pattern you need to follow:

- **Month:** in two-digit format. For example, July is 07.
- **Day:** in two-digit format. For example, the 19th is 19. Another example: the 7th is 07.
- **Time:** in military format of hours and minutes. For example, 2:00 p.m. is 1400.
- **Year:** Last two digits.

In my example, the numerical representation is [0719140016](#). This stands for July (07) 19, (19), 2 p.m. (1400), 2016 (16).

1. At the prompt, type `date [numerical]`, with `[numerical]` being the representation you figured out. In my example, I typed `date 0719140016`. Then press Return.

A screenshot of a terminal window titled "Terminal — -bash — 80x24". The terminal shows the following sequence of commands and outputs:

```
[~bash-3.2# date  
Mon Dec 31 18:28:36 PST 2012  
[~bash-3.2# ntpdate -u time.apple.com  
19 Jul 14:17:45 ntpdate[468]: step time server 17.253.26.125 offset 111955684.78  
3683 sec  
[~bash-3.2# date  
Tue Jul 19 14:17:52 PDT 2016  
[~bash-3.2# date 0719140016
```

The date should be set. You can check the date again by typing `date` at the prompt. You can now run the installer.