UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

FAKULTI TEKNOLOGI DAN KEJURUTERAAN ELEKTRONIK DAN KOMPUTER

BERR 2243

DATABASE & CLOUD SYSTEM

SEM 2 2024/2025

EXERCISE: WEEK 8

No	Name	Matrix No	Photo
1	NURUL ANIS HAFIFZA BINTI AMRAN	B122410321	
2	NUR AIN HIDAYAH BINTI ABDUL RAHIM	B122410323	

Submission :

1. **Wireshark Captures**:

o login.pcapng and admin-access.pcapng

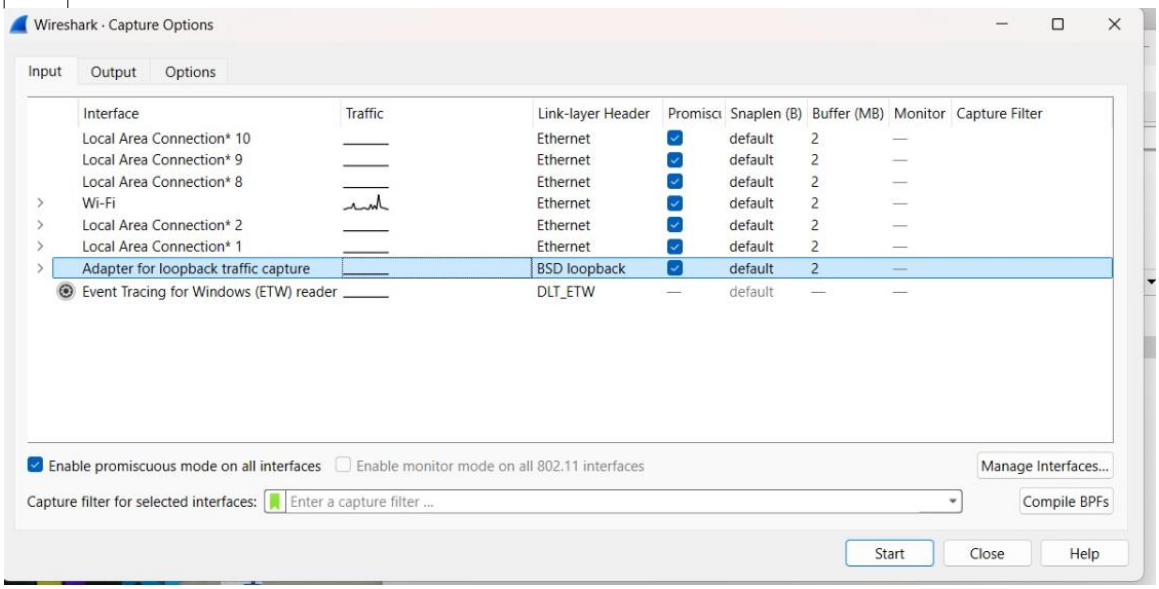
2. **Analysis Report**:

PART 1 : Wireshark Setup

TASK 1: Install Wireshark

1. Wireshark are downloaded and installed.

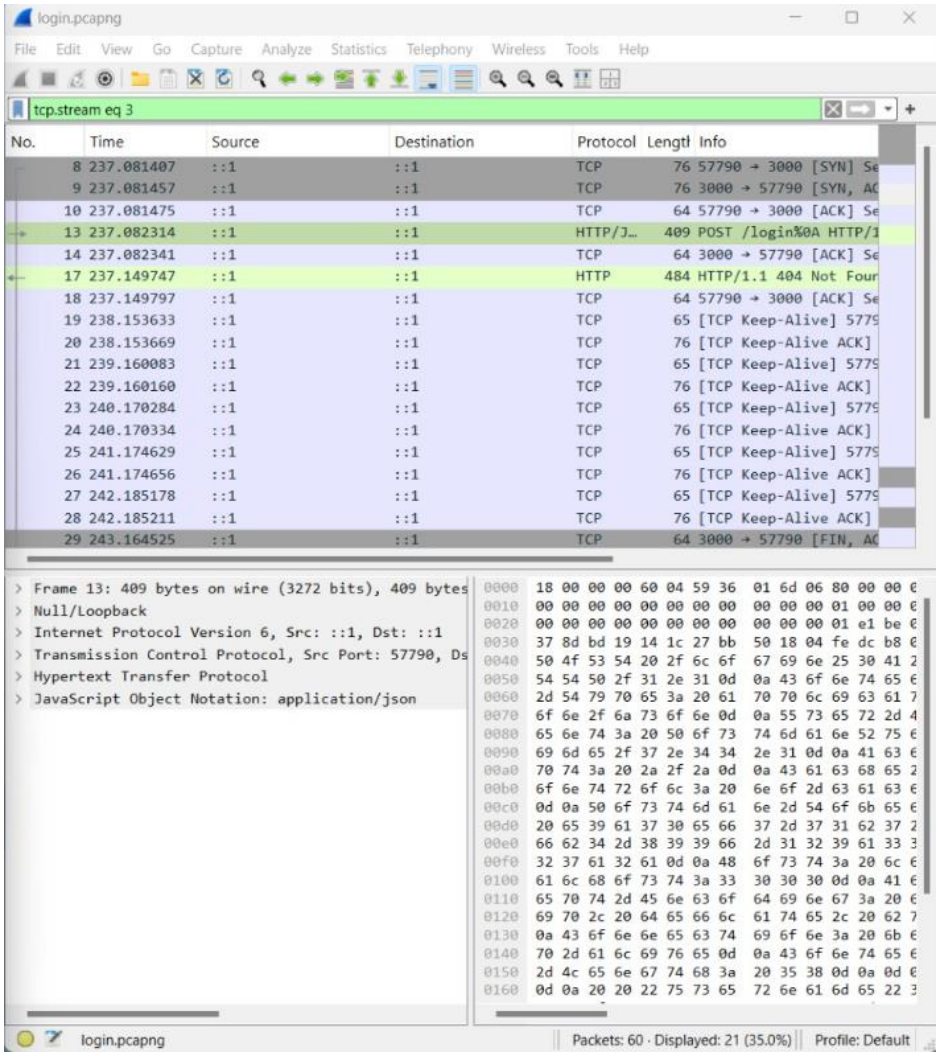
TASK 2: Configure Loopback Capture



Npcap Loopback Adapter have been selected and tcp port 3000 are filtered.

PART 2 : Capturing Authentication Flow

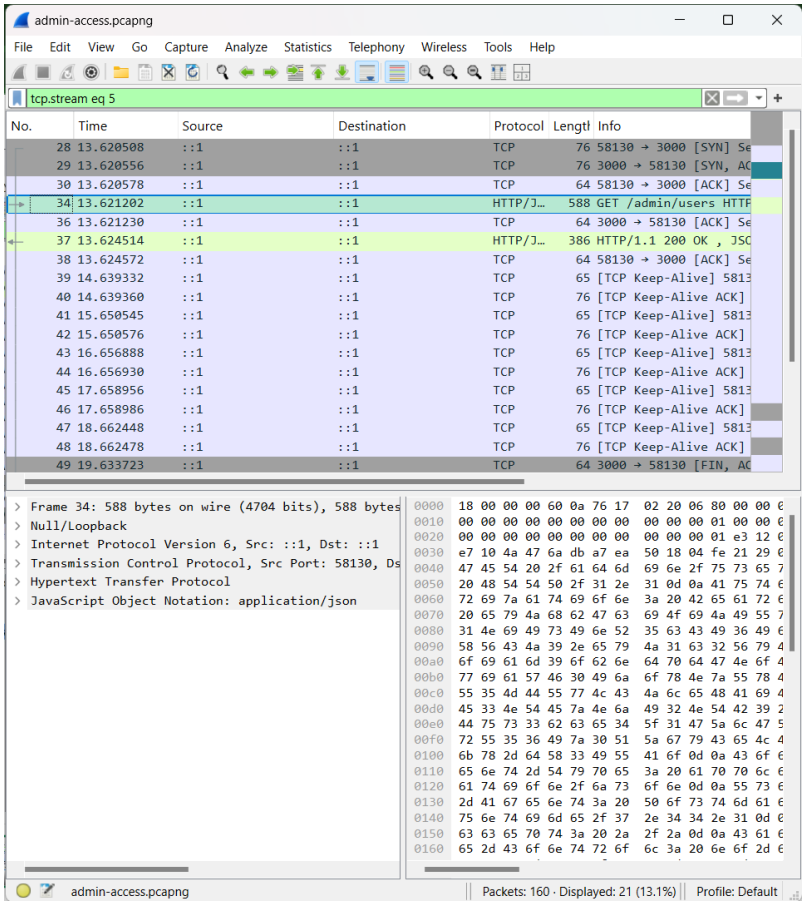
TASK 3: Capture Login Request.



Send login request to Postman then capture using Wireshark and save it as login.pcapng.

TASK 4: Capture Protected Resource Access

Access admin endpoint in Postman then capture using Wireshark and save it as



o Marked screenshots of TCP streams

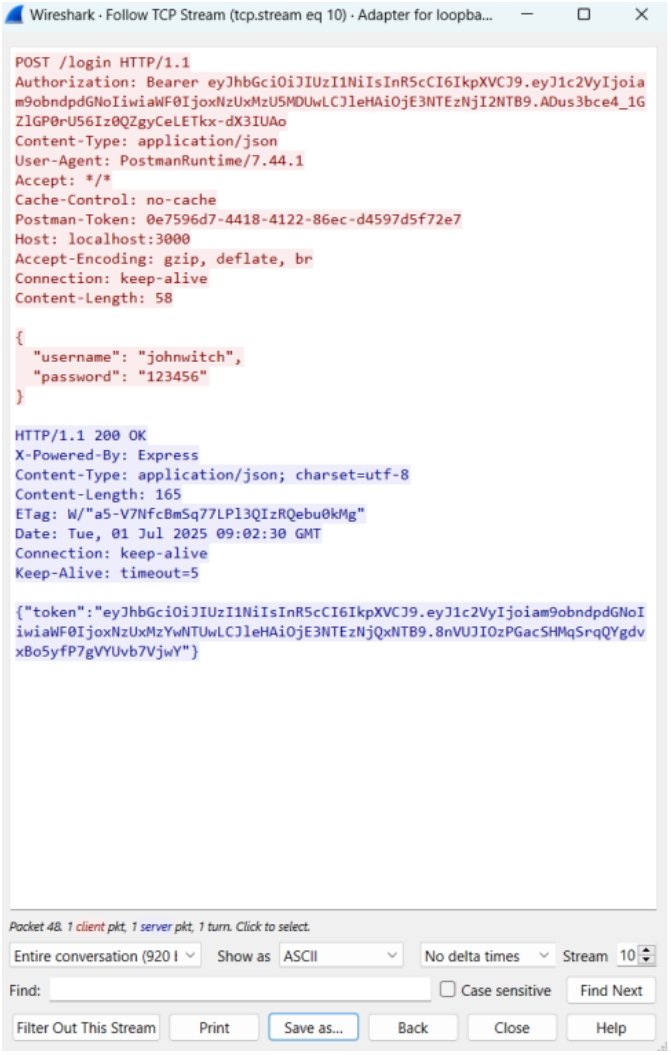
PART 3: TCP Stream Analysis

TASK 5: Analyze Login Request

1 In login.pcapng then Follow and TCP Stream. After that, identify components:

2 HTTPS Request: Method, path, headers, JSON body.

3. HTTPS Respond: Status code, JWT token in body.

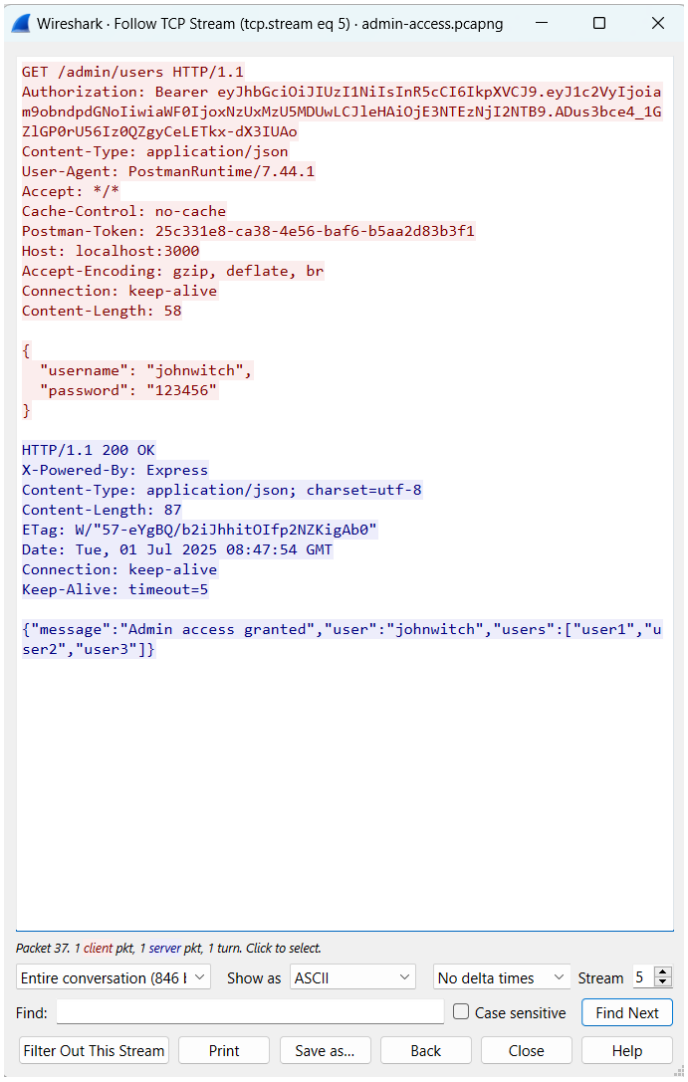


TASK 6: Analyze Protected Request

1 In admin-access.pcapng then Follow and TCP Stream. After that examine:

2 Authorization: Bearer <token> header

3 Server response with user data



Exercise Questions – Wireshark Analysis

1. Protocol Analysis

• What is the exact sequence of TCP packets during the 3-way handshake?
- SYN: Client → Server
- SYN-ACK: Server → Client
- ACK: Client → Server

• How many packets are exchanged for a successful login request?
- Approximately 6–8 packets, including 3-way handshake, login POST request, server response, and TCP session management packets (e.g., ACK, FIN).

2. Header Inspection

• What headers does Postman include that a browser might omit?

- Postman-Token
- User-Agent: PostmanRuntime/...
- Cache-Control: no-cache
- Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate, br

• How is the Content-Length header calculated?

- It equals the number of bytes in the HTTP request body.
- For example, the JSON body {"username": "johnwitch", "password": "123456"} has 58 characters, so Content-Length is 58.

3. JWT Transmission

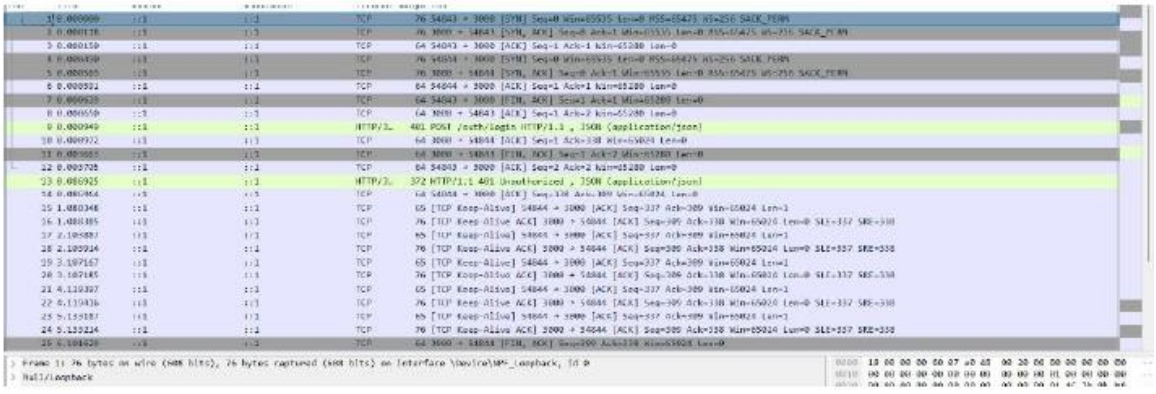
• At which OSI layer is the JWT token visible? Why is this dangerous?

- Visible at the Application Layer (Layer 7).
- Dangerous because it is sent in plaintext over HTTP, allowing attackers to steal and reuse the token (session hijacking).

• How would HTTPS change what you see in Wireshark?

- With HTTPS, the HTTP content is encrypted.
- You would only see encrypted TLS packets in Wireshark, making the JWT and headers unreadable.

4. Error Handling



• Capture an invalid login attempt. What status code is returned?

- The status code returned for an invalid login attempt is 401 Unauthorized. This indicates that the request was made with invalid credentials.

• How does the TCP stream differ for a 401 vs 200 response?

- A 200 OK response includes a JSON payload with a JWT token or user data, indicating successful authentication.

- A 401 Unauthorized response generally has a smaller payload and often includes a message indicating authentication failure. Both may have similar TCP stream structures, but the content length and response body differ.

5. Performance

• Measure time between POST /login request and response.

- From Wireshark, the POST /login request starts at time 19.826420 and the response (200 OK) arrives at 19.827433. The time difference is approximately 1.013 milliseconds.

• What contributes to this latency?

- Factors include:
  • Server processing time to validate credentials and generate a token.
  • Network stack processing (even on localhost).
  • Overhead from Postman runtime and JSON encoding/decoding.
  • Any artificial delay in the backend API for testing or debugging.

3. **Security Recommendations**:

o 3 risks of unencrypted JWT transmission

o 2 ways to enhance API security

API Security Summary

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3 Risks of Unencrypted JWT Transmission

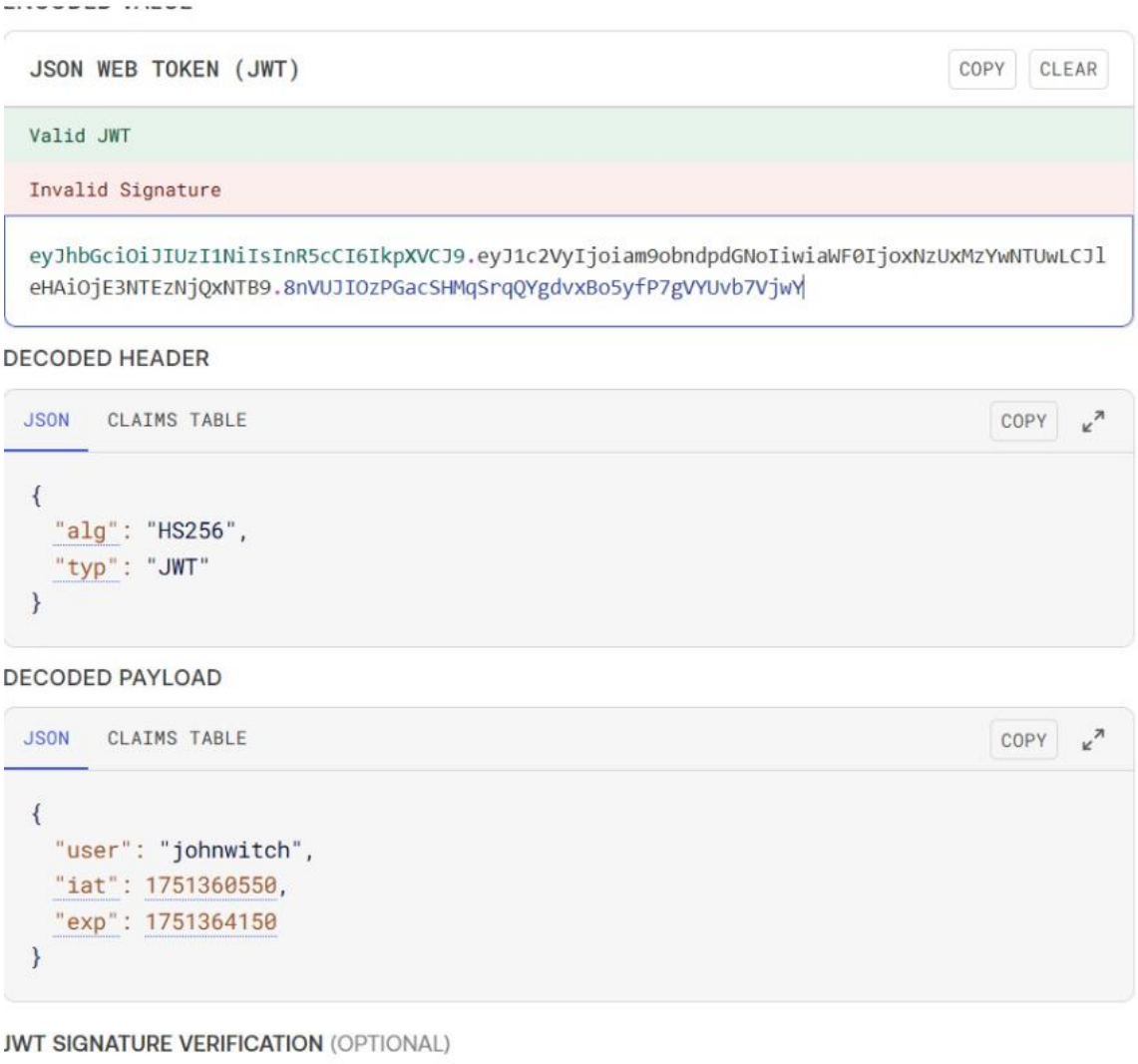
1. Token Theft via Network Sniffing:
   JWTs transmitted over HTTP can be intercepted using tools like Wireshark or tcpdump. Attackers can replay stolen tokens to impersonate users.
2. Sensitive Information Exposure:
   JWT payloads are only Base64-encoded, not encrypted. User data (e.g., usernames, roles, email) can be read in plain text.
3. Session Hijacking and Privilege Escalation:
   If an attacker modifies a JWT (e.g., changing "user": "user1" to "user": "admin") and the server fails to validate the signature properly, it can lead to unauthorized access.

2 Ways to Enhance API Security

4. Use HTTPS (TLS Encryption):
   Always enforce HTTPS to encrypt tokens in transit and prevent man-in-the-middle (MITM) attacks.

5. Validate JWT Signature and Expiry Strictly:
   Ensure the server verifies the JWT signature using a secure, secret key, and checks `exp` (expiry) and `iat` (issued-at) fields to reject old or tampered tokens.

Security Exercise – JWT Token Vulnerability



1. What user information is exposed in the JWT?

By capturing and decoding the JWT from Wireshark using jwt.io, the following payload (Base64-decoded) is revealed:

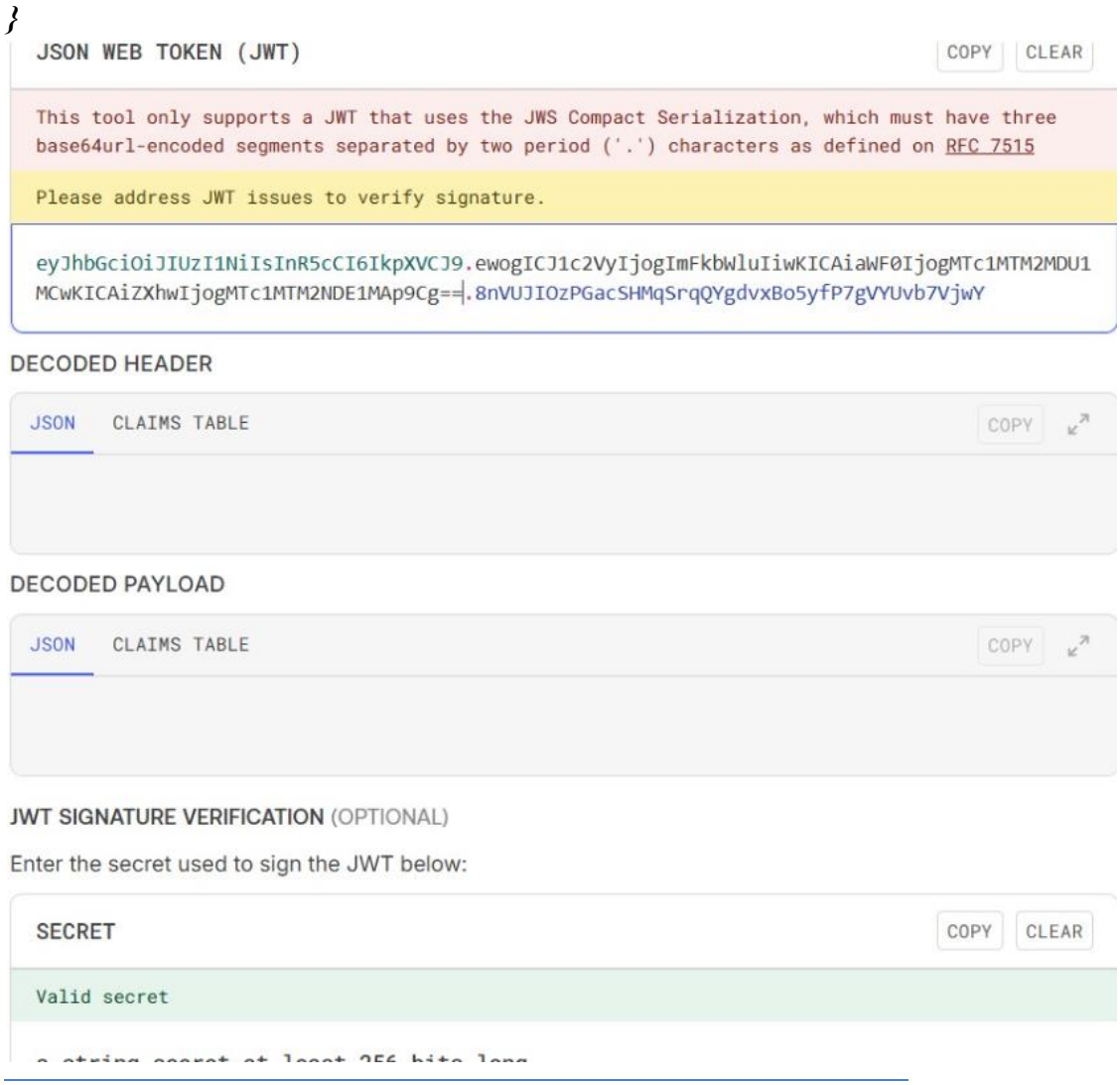
```
{
  "user": "johnwitch",
  "iat": 1751360550,
  "exp": 1751364150
}
```

This means the JWT exposes:
- The username: johnwitch
- The issued-at time (iat) and expiry time (exp) in Unix timestamp format

Note: JWTs are only Base64-encoded, not encrypted, so sensitive user information can be exposed if traffic is not protected by HTTPS.

2. What happens when the JWT is modified (e.g., change user to admin)?
When attempting to modify the payload, for example:

```
{
  "user": "admin",
  "iat": 1751360550,
  "exp": 1751364150
```



...and re-encode the token, the following occurs:
- The signature becomes invalid, because the new payload doesn't match the original HMAC signature generated by the server's secret key.
- As a result, the server rejects the request with a 401 Unauthorized or similar response.

3. Why doesn't this work in production?
Because:
- JWT tokens are signed with a secret key known only to the server.
- When the payload is tampered with, the signature no longer matches.
- Production servers verify the signature before trusting the payload.

This mechanism ensures data integrity and prevents unauthorized access, even if the token is intercepted.

4. Why is this dangerous without HTTPS?

- Without HTTPS, JWTs are transmitted in plaintext, making them visible in tools like Wireshark.
- Attackers can capture, replay, or attempt to modify tokens.
- Even though tampering is blocked (due to signature verification), token theft (token hijacking) remains a risk.

5. How would HTTPS change what you see in Wireshark?

- With HTTPS, the entire HTTP traffic (including JWTs in headers or body) is encrypted.
- Wireshark would not be able to read the contents of the token or any user information.
- You would see encrypted TLS packets, not readable JSON.