

# On Roman Numerals

The system of Roman still sees some specialized use today.

Roman numerals traditionally indicate the order of rulers or ships that share the same name (i.e. Queen Elizabeth II). They are also sometimes still used in the publishing industry for copyright dates, and on cornerstones and gravestones when the owner of a building or the family of the deceased wishes to create an impression of classical dignity. The Roman numbering system also lives on in our languages, which still use Latin word roots to express numerical ideas. A few examples: unilateral, duo, quadricep, septuagenarian, decade, and milliliter.

The big differences between Roman and Arabic numerals (the ones we use today) are that Romans didn't have a symbol for zero, and that numeral placement within a number can sometimes indicate subtraction rather than addition.

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**I= one (1)**  
**V= five (5)**  
**X= ten (10)**

**L= fifty (50)**  
**C= one hundred (100)**  
**D= five hundred (500)**

**M= one thousand (1,000)**

Hints in reading Roman Numerals

If a character of equal or lesser value **FOLLOWS** a larger character, then add the value of the two characters together.

EXAMPLES:

XI means  $10 + 1 = 11$

XXVI means  $10 + 10 + 5 + 1 = 26$

If a character of lesser value **PRECEDES** a larger character, then subtract the value of the smaller from the value of the larger character.

EXAMPLES:

IX means  $10 - 1 = 9$

XL means  $50 - 10 = 40$

More Examples:

CLXVII means  $100 + 50 + 10 + 5 + 1 + 1 = 167$

LIX means  $50 + (10 - 1)$ , or  $50 + 9 = 59$

XLIII means  $(50 - 10) + 1 + 1 + 1 = 43$

XVI means  $10 + 5 + 1 = 16$

XCIX means  $(100 - 10) + (10 - 1)$ , or  $90 + 9 = 99$

XLIX means  $(50 - 10) + (10 - 1)$ , or  $40 + 9 = 49$