

## Here are the basics:

### I

The easiest way to note down a number is to make that many marks - little I's. Thus I means 1, II means 2, III means 3. However, four strokes seemed like too many....

### V

So the Romans moved on to the symbol for 5 - V. Placing I in front of the V — or placing any smaller number in front of any larger number — indicates subtraction. So IV means 4. After V comes a series of additions - VI means 6, VII means 7, VIII means 8.

### X

X means 10. But wait — what about 9? Same deal. IX means to subtract I from X, leaving 9. Numbers in the teens, twenties and thirties follow the same form as the first set, only with X's indicating the number of tens. So XXXI is 31, and XXIV is 24.

### L

L means 50. Based on what you've learned, I bet you can figure out what 40 is. If you guessed XL, you're right = 10 subtracted from 50. And thus 60, 70, and 80 are LX, LXX and LXXX.

### C

C stands for *centum*, the Latin word for 100. A *centurion* led 100 men. We still use this in words like "century" and "cent." The subtraction rule means 90 is written as XC. Like the X's and L's, the C's are tacked on to the beginning of numbers to indicate how many hundreds there are: CCCLXIX is 369.

### D

D stands for 500. As you can probably guess by this time, CD means 400. So CDXLVIII is 448. (See why we switched systems?)

### M

M is 1,000. You see a lot of Ms because Roman numerals are used a lot to indicate dates. For instance, this page was written in the year of Nova Roma's founding, 1998 CE (Common Era; Christians use AD for Anno Domini, "year of our Lord"). That year is written as MCMXCVIII. But wait! Nova Roma counts years from the founding of Rome, *ab urbe condita*. By that reckoning this is 2751, or MMDCCLI.

### V

Larger numbers were indicated by putting a horizontal line over them, which meant to multiply the number by 1,000. Hence the V at left has a line over the top, which means 5,000. This usage is no longer current, because the largest numbers usually expressed in the Roman system are dates, as discussed above.

1 = I  
2 = II  
3 = III  
4 = IV  
5 = V  
6 = VI  
7 = VII  
8 = VIII  
9 = IX  
10 = X  
11 = XI  
12 = XII  
13 = XIII  
14 = XIV  
15 = XV  
16 = XVI  
17 = XVII  
18 = XVIII  
19 = XIX  
20 = XX  
21 = XXI  
22 = XXII  
23 = XXIII  
24 = XXIV  
25 = XXV  
26 = XXVI  
27 = XXVII  
28 = XXVIII  
29 = XXIX  
30 = XXX  
31 = XXXI  
32 = XXXII  
33 = XXXIII  
34 = XXXIV  
35 = XXXV  
36 = XXXVI  
37 = XXXVII  
38 = XXXVIII  
39 = XXXIX

40 = XL  
41 = XLI  
42 = XLII  
43 = XLIII  
44 = XLIV  
45 = XLV  
46 = XLVI  
47 = XLVII  
48 = XLVIII  
49 = XLIX  
50 = L  
51 = LI

98 = XCVIII  
99 = XCIX  
100 = C  
101 = CI  
102 = CII

198 = CXCVIII  
199 = CXCIX  
200 = CC  
201 = CCI  
202 = CCII

498 = CDXCVIII  
499 = CDXCIX  
500 = D  
501 = DI  
502 = DII  
503 = DIII

998 = CMXCVIII  
999 = CMXCIX  
1000 = M  
1001 = MI  
1002 = MII