

The Roman Number System

Roman Numerals used letters to represent numbers. Letters were used for the numbers 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500 and 1000, like this:

| | |
|---|------|
| I | 1 |
| V | 5 |
| X | 10 |
| L | 50 |
| C | 100 |
| D | 500 |
| M | 1000 |

There was no zero in the number system that the Romans used.

There are a few rules that you have to remember when you are reading Roman Numerals. If a smaller number comes after a bigger number, then the small number gets added on. So,

VI means $V + I$, which means $5 + 1$. VI is 6.

VII means $V + II$, which means $5 + 2$. VII is 7.

If the smaller number comes before the bigger number, that means that the small number has to be taken away, or subtracted.

IV means $V - I$, which means $5 - 1$, which is 4.

IX means $X - I$, which means $10 - 1$, which is 9.

If the smaller number is on the left, it gets subtracted. If the smaller number is on the right, it gets added on to the value of the bigger number.

You can still see Roman Numerals being used today. Some clock faces have Roman Numerals on them, like this one:



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When we see the names and titles of members of the Royal Family, they are written as Henry VIII, Edward VI, or Elizabeth II.