

DE NUMERIS ROMANIS (ON ROMAN NUMERALS)

Roman numerals traditionally indicate the order of rulers or ships that share the same name (e.g. Queen Elizabeth II). They are still used in the publishing industry for copyright dates, sporting events, and on cornerstones and gravestones (e.g. © MMIV, Superbowl XVI). The Roman numbering system also lives on in English derivatives, which still uses Latin word roots to express numerical ideas, for example: *unilateral*, *duo*, *quadri-cep*, *septua-genarian*, *decade*, and *milliliter*.

The Roman not only look different than the Arabic numerals the ones we use today; they also construct complex numbers (i.e. those that contain more than one symbol) differently. Romans did not have a symbol for zero, and the placement of numerals within a number can indicate subtraction rather than addition.

ROMAN NUMERALS

I = *unus* = one (1)

V = *quīnque* = five (5)

X = *decem* = ten (10)

L = *quīnquāgintā* = fifty (50)

C = *centum* = one hundred (100)

D = *quīngentī* = five hundred (500)

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

HOW TO READ ROMAN NUMERALS

In general Roman numerals are arranged left to right from largest number to smallest. So, characters of equal or lesser value **FOLLOW** larger characters, indicating that their values should be added together.

Examples:

$$XI = 10 + 1 = 11$$

$$LX = 50 + 10 = 60$$

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

$$VII = 5 + 1 + 1 = 7$$

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

Examples:

$$IX = 10 - 1 = 9$$

$$XL = 50 - 10 = 40$$

$$IV = 5 - 1 = 4$$

$$XIX = 10 + (10 - 1) = 19$$

Additional Examples:

$$MMV = 1000 + 1000 + 5 = 2005$$

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

$$LIX = 50 + (10 - 1), \text{ or } 50 + 9 = 59$$

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

$$XCIX = (100 - 10) + (10 - 1), \text{ or } 90 + 9 = 99$$

$$XLIX = (50 - 10) + (10 - 1), \text{ or } 40 + 9 = 49$$

$$DCCCXIX = 500 + 100 + 100 + 100 + 10 + (10 - 1) = 819$$

$$XVI = 10 + 5 + 1 = 16$$