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Roman numerals

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Roman numerals are a method of writing numbers employed primarily by the ancient Romans. In place of digits, the Romans used letters to represent the numbers central to the system:

<i>I</i>	1
<i>V</i>	5
<i>X</i>	10
<i>L</i>	50
<i>C</i>	100
<i>D</i>	500
<i>M</i>	1000

Larger numbers can be made by writing a bar over the letter, which means one thousand times as much. For instance \overline{V} is 5000.

Other numbers were written by putting letters together. For instance *II* means 2. Larger letters go on the left, so *LII* is 52, but *ILL* is not a valid Roman numeral.

One additional rule allows a letter to the left of a larger letter to signify subtracting the smaller from the larger. For instance *IV* is 4. This can only be done once; 3 is written *III*, not *IIV*. Also, it is generally required that the smaller letter be the one immediately smaller than the larger, so 1999 is usually written *MCMXCIX*, not *MIM*.

It is worth noting that today it is usually considered incorrect to repeat a letter four times, so *IV* is preferred to *IIII*. However many older monuments do not use the subtraction rule at all, so 44 was written *XXXXIIII* instead of the now preferable *XLIV*.