<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals>

**Roman numerals**, the [numeric system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Numeric_system) used in [ancient Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome), employs combinations of letters from the [Latin alphabet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_alphabet) to signify values. The numbers 1 to 10 can be expressed in Roman numerals as follows:

I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X.

Reading Roman numerals

|  |
| --- |
| MMXIII |
| "2013" as a Roman numeral |

Roman Numerals, as used today, are based on seven symbols:[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#cite_note-gordon-1)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Symbol** | **Value** |
| [I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I) | [1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_(number)) |
| [V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V) | [5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5_(number)) |
| [X](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X) | [10](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/10_(number)) |
| [L](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L) | [50](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/50_(number)) |
| [C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C) | [100](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100_(number)) |
| [D](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D) | [500](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/500_(number)) |
| [M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M) | [1,000](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1000_(number)) |

Numbers are formed by combining symbols together and adding the values. So II is two ones, i.e. 2, and XIII is a ten and three ones, i.e. 13. There is no zero in this system, so 207, for example, is CCVII, using the symbols for two hundreds, a five and two ones. 1066 is MLXVI, one thousand, fifty and ten, a five and a one.

Symbols are placed from left to right in order of value, starting with the largest. However, in a few specific cases,[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#cite_note-2) to avoid four characters being repeated in succession (such as IIII or XXXX) these can be reduced using [subtractive notation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtractive_notation) as follows:[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#cite_note-3)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#cite_note-martelli-4)

* the numeral I can be placed before V and X to make 4 units (IV) and 9 units (IX) respectively
* X can be placed before L and C to make 40 (XL) and 90 (XC) respectively
* C can be placed before D and M to make 400 (CD) and 900 (CM) according to the same pattern[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#cite_note-sun-5)

An example using the above rules would be 1904: this is composed of 1 (one thousand), 9 (nine hundreds), 0 (zero tens), and 4 (four units). To write the Roman numeral, each of the non-zero digits should be treated separately. Thus 1,000 = M, 900 = CM, and 4 = IV. Therefore, 1904 is MCMIV. This reflects typical modern usage rather than a universally accepted convention: historically Roman numerals were often written less consistently.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#cite_note-adams-6)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:AdmiraltyArchLondonCloseup.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.23wmf4/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:AdmiraltyArchLondonCloseup.jpg)

An inscription on [Admiralty Arch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admiralty_Arch), London. The numeral is 1910, although MCMX would be more usual

A common exception to the practice of placing a smaller value before a larger in order to reduce the number of characters, is the use ofIIII instead of IV for 4, especially, although by no means exclusively, on clock faces; see [below](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#.22IIII.22_on_clocks). Another example of the additive rather than subtractive form of numbers is the representation of 1910 in Roman Numerals on [Admiralty Arch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admiralty_Arch), London - where DCCCC is used instead of CM for 900 (see illustration). In general, the "rules" about subtractively applied symbols are the most frequently "broken".

Below are some examples of the modern use of Roman Numerals.

* 1954 as MCMLIV (Trailer for the movie [*The Last Time I Saw Paris*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Time_I_Saw_Paris))[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_numerals#cite_note-7)
* 1990 as MCMXC (The title of musical project [Enigma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enigma_(musical_project))'s debut album [*MCMXC a.D.*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MCMXC_a.D.), named after the year of its release.)
* 2008 as MMVIII - the year of the games of the XXIX (29th) [Olympiad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympiad) (in [Beijing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_Summer_Olympics))