

Grammar: Roman numerals

Ordinal and cardinal numbers

This page provides some basic information on how to deal with Roman numbers, expressed as numerals and words.

A cardinal number is one like: one, two, three
An ordinal number is one like: first, second third

The basic Roman numerals are:

Number	lower case	upper case
1	i	I
5	v	V
10	x	X
50	l	L
100	c	C
500	d	D
1000	m	M

Numbers are made up by adding these together.

Number	Cardinal	Ordinal	Roman numeral
1	unus, -a, -um	primus, -a, -um	i
2	duo	secundus	ii
3	tres	tertius	iii
4	quattuor	quartus	iv
5	quinque	quintus	v
6	sex	sextus	vi
7	septem	septimus	vii
8	octo	octavus	viii
9	novem	nonus	ix
10	decem	decimus	x
11	undecim	undecimus	xi
12	duodecim	duodecimus	xii
13	tredecim	tredecimus	xiii
14	quattuordecim	quattuordecimus	xiv

15	quindecim	quindecimus	xv
16	sedecim	sedecimus	xvi
17	septendecim	septendecimus	xvii
18	duodeviginti	duodevice(n)simus	xviii
19	undeviginti	undevise(n)simus	xix
20	viginti	vice(n)simus	xx
21	viginti unus	vice(n)simus primus	xxi
30	triginta	trice(n)simus	xxx
40	quadraginta	quadrage(n)simus	xl
50	quingenta	quingage(n)simus	l
60	sexaginta	sexage(n)simus	lx
70	septuaginta	septuage(n)simus	lxx
80	octoginta	octoge(n)simus	lxxx
90	nonaginta	nonage(n)simus	xc
100	centum	cente(n)simus	c
200	ducenti	ducente(n)simus	cc
500	quingenti	quingente(n)simus	d
1000	mille	mille(n)simus	m

unus, and all the ordinal numbers, decline like 1st & 3rd declension adjectives and agree with the noun they describe in any sentence.

Years

Modern years are expressed using Roman numerals quite frequently. They are formed by piecing together all the different elements.

So 1880 =

1000 +	500 +	400 +	50 +	80
M	D	CCC	L	XXX

= MDCCCLXXX

There is often more than one way of expressing a date. Thus there were several ways of expressing 1999. Including:

MDCLXCIX

or simply:

MIM

Roman dates are often given A.U.C. This stands for *ab urbe condita* which means 'from the founding of the city'. This is standardly reckoned as 753BC.

Examples drawn from the exercises

The number after each question indicates the exercise from which it has been drawn, so that you can look at the example in context.

1. His autem omnibus druidibus praeest unus, qui summam inter eos habet auctoritatem. *Exercise 1*
2. Altitudo muri L. cubitorum eminent spatio. *Exercise 10*
3. et designat oculis *Exercise 7*
4. Ac ne totam quidem urbem tectis occupaverunt - per LXXX stadia habitabatur. *Exercise 10*
5. Totius operis ambitus CCCLXV stadia complectitur. *Exercise 10*