

Ellie's Roman Numeral Expedition

Learning objective: To read, write, and convert Roman numerals up to 100 (C) and understand their place in history.

Ellie the elephant is visiting an ancient archaeological site. She has found stone tablets with Roman numerals carved into them, but some are missing! Use your knowledge of Roman numerals (I, V, X, L, C) to solve these puzzles. Match the modern numbers to their Roman numeral counterparts and help Ellie complete her historical record.

Word bank: I = 1 · V = 5 · X = 10 · L = 50 · C = 100 · Addition · Subtraction

1. Ellie finds a tablet marked 'XL'. Explain why this represents 40 rather than 60. Justify your answer using the rule of subtraction. (2 marks)

2. Convert the year of a coin found at the site: 84. Write this in Roman numerals. (1 mark)

3. Compare and contrast the Roman numeral system with our modern Hindu-Arabic system. Why is there no symbol for zero in the Roman system? (2 marks)

4. If a Roman merchant sold a scroll for £99, how would he write that price on a receipt using Roman numerals? (1 mark)

5. What might happen if a Roman architect tried to write the number 150 using only the symbols I, V, X, L, and C? Explain the limitation. (2 marks)

6. Order these values from smallest to largest: XC, LX, XIV, LIX. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a Roman stone tablet that displays your favourite number between 50 and 100 using Roman numerals. Decorate the border with patterns similar to those found in ancient mosaics.



Extension challenge: Design your own 'secret code' system using letters of the alphabet to represent numbers. Write a short message in your code and challenge a partner to decipher the Roman numeral values hidden within it.