

Ellie's Roman Numeral Historical Journal

Learning objective: To recognise, write, and convert Roman numerals up to 100 (C) and understand their historical significance.

Help Ellie the elephant curate her historical record! Use your knowledge of Roman numerals to complete the sections below. Remember that Roman numerals use letters to represent values, and you must follow the rules for addition and subtraction. Use the word bank to help you with your explanations.

Word bank: Symbol · Value · Subtract · Addition · Numeral · Century · Position · Equivalent

1. The Basic Symbols: Explain the value of the primary Roman symbols (I, V, X, L, C). Why do you think the Romans chose these specific letters? (3 marks)

2. Conversion Challenge: Convert the following years into Roman numerals: 44, 79, and 92. Show your working out for each one. (3 marks)

3. The Rule of Subtraction: Explain why we write 4 as 'IV' instead of 'IIII'. Justify why this rule makes reading large numbers more efficient. (3 marks)

4. Compare and Contrast: Compare our modern Hindu-Arabic number system (0-9) with the Roman numeral system. What might happen if we tried to use Roman numerals for complex modern maths like long division? (4 marks)

5. Historical Context: Ellie has found a stone carving dated 'LXV'. If this stone was carved to celebrate a ruler's reign, how many years did they rule? Explain how you calculated this. (2 marks)

6. Creative Synthesis: If you were creating a brand new number system for a secret society, which symbols would you choose and what rules would you implement to make them easy to read? (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Challenge: Investigate why Roman numerals do not have a symbol for zero. Write a short paragraph explaining the mathematical impact of the 'discovery' of zero and how it changed the way civilisations calculated values.