

Max's Roman Numeral Challenge

Learning objective: To read, write, and convert Roman numerals up to 1000 (M) and understand their historical context.

Read the information below carefully. Work through the questions to help Max the monkey solve the ancient puzzle of the Roman counting system. Remember to check your work for accuracy.

Max has discovered an ancient stone tablet in his garden! It is covered in strange letters: I, V, X, L, C, D, and M. 'These are Roman numerals!' says Max. Unlike our number system, which uses place value, the Romans used letters to represent specific values. I = 1, V = 5, X = 10, L = 50, C = 100, D = 500, and M = 1000. If a smaller numeral is placed before a larger one, you subtract it (like IV = 4). If it is placed after, you add it (like VI = 6). Max needs your expertise to decipher the rest of the tablet.

Word bank: Numeral · Symbol · Value · Convert · Ancient · Addition · Subtraction

1. Convert the following Roman numerals into our modern digits: a) CXV, b) CDL, c) MMX. (3 marks)

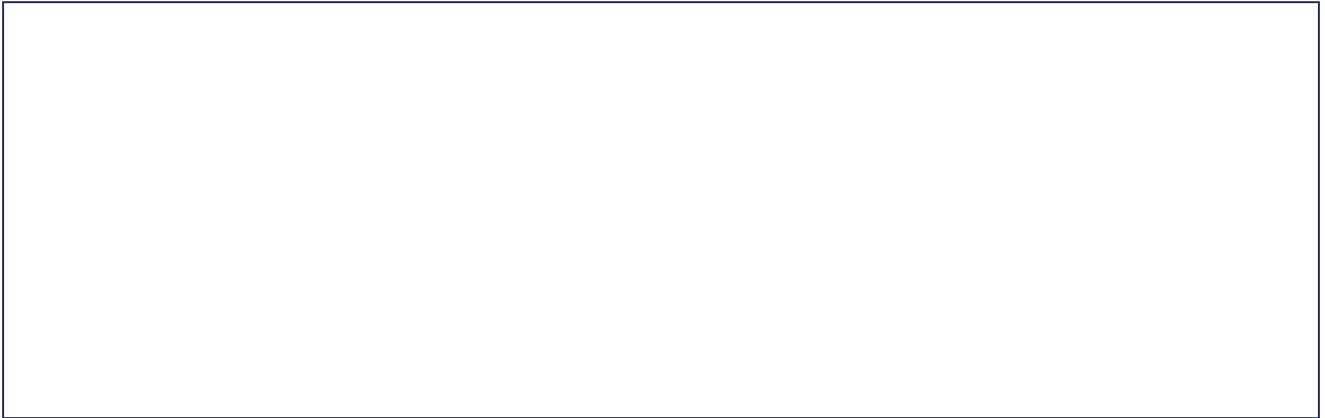
2. Explain why the Roman system is different from our modern decimal system. Consider why it might be difficult to perform complex column addition using Roman numerals. (4 marks)

3. Max finds the number 99 on a scroll. Write this number in Roman numerals and justify your choice of symbols. (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the symbols for 50 (L) and 500 (D). How do these symbols change when you subtract 10 (X) from them? (3 marks)

5. What might happen if we still used Roman numerals for all our modern-day maths calculations? Provide a logical argument. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a Roman-style stone monument that displays your age using Roman numerals at the top. Decorate the base with patterns inspired by ancient architecture.



Extension challenge: Research the year your school was founded. Calculate the difference in years between that date and the current year, then write both numbers as Roman numerals. If you were to create a new symbol for the number 5,000, what would it look like and why?