Meet the Roman symbols: answers and notes

What your child practised: the values of I, V, X, L and C, and adding symbols written biggest to smallest to read and write Roman numerals (Year 4).

Page 1 · Warm up

X = **10** · C = **100** · V = **5** · L = **50** · I = **1**

Page 2 · Try it together

Answers will vary. Check by adding the card values: for example 23 = X X I I I = **XXIII**.

Page 2 · A. Match

I → **1** · L → **50** · X → **10** · C → **100** · V → **5**

Page 3 · B. Add up the symbols

VII = **7** · XII = **12** · XXV = **25**
LXI = **61** · LXXVI = **76** · LXXXV = **85**

Page 3 · C. Write in Roman numerals

3 = **III** · 8 = **VIII** · 15 = **XV**
20 = **XX** · 52 = **LII** · 100 = **C**

Page 3 · D. The bigger number

XV (15, not 11) · **L** (50, not 30) · **XXXI** (31, not 26) · **LXV** (65, not 56) · **C** (100, not 80)

Challenge: No. Roman symbols aren't digits in places, so you don't write them side by side. You add their values: X + V = 10 + 5 = **15**. If your child gets this right, ask them how a Roman would write 105 (**CV**, 100 + 5).

Watch out for

- **Reading symbols as digits** (XV as 105, XII as 1011). Say "add the values" and write the + signs between them: 10 + 1 + 1.
- **Mixing up L and C.** C is 100, like a century (100 years). L is half of that: 50.
- **Thinking more symbols means a bigger number.** LXXX has four symbols but is smaller than C, which has one. Compare values, not lengths.
- **Using four of the same symbol**, like IIII for 4. The Romans usually avoided this: chapter 2 shows how 4 and 9 are written.

Going further (5 minutes, no paper)

- **Clock spotting:** find a clock or watch face with Roman numerals and read the hours together.
- **Say it in Roman:** the grown-up says a number to 30 (not 4, 9, 14, 19, 24 or 29) and the child spells out its symbols.
- **In the game:** Chapter 2, The Legion Camp, shows why IV is 4 and IX is 9.