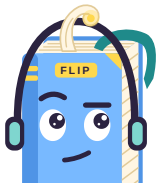
Name _____ Date _____

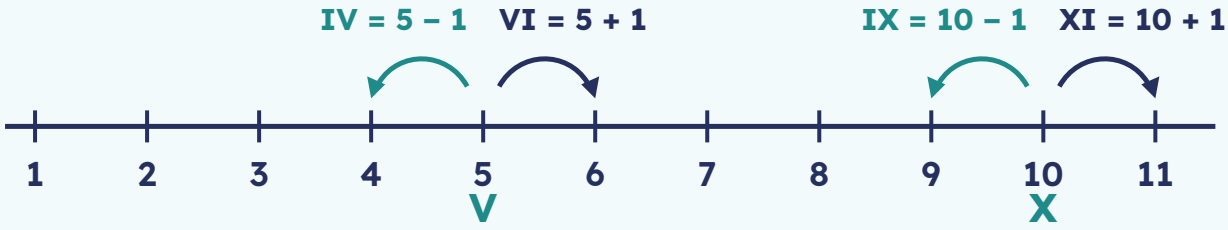
The take-away rule

A smaller symbol in front of a bigger one is taken away: IV is 4.

1 Learn



The Romans didn't like writing the same symbol four times in a row. So for 4 they didn't write IIII. They wrote **IV**: one **before** five, so 5 take away 1.



What number is this?

XIV

1. Read from the left. **X** = 10.

2. Next, **I** comes **before** a bigger symbol, **V**. Take it away: IV = 5 – 1 = 4.

3. Add the parts: 10 + 4 = **14**

Flip's tip: up to 100, only four pairs take away: **IV** (4), **IX** (9), **XL** (40) and **XC** (90). And never write the same symbol more than **three times** in a row.

Warm up: add or take away? Write the number.

VI = ☐ **IV** = ☐ **XI** = ☐ **IX** = ☐

Grown-ups: ask "Is the small symbol before or after the big one?" before your child works out each number. Before means take away; after means add.

Name _____ Date _____

2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Swap the soldiers

You need: paper and a pen. Tear the paper into 6 cards and write **I**, **V**, **X**, **L**, **C** and one more **X**.

1. The grown-up puts two cards side by side, like **I V**. The child says "add" or "take away", and the number.
2. Swap the two cards round (**V I**). What is the number now?
3. Try **I** and **X**, then **X** and **L**, then **X** and **C**. Write each pair, both ways round.
4. Puzzle: use **X**, **I** and **V** once each. Which numbers can you make that follow the rules?

Cards	Add or take away?	Number	Cards swapped	Number
I V			V I	
I X			X I	
X L			L X	
X C			C X	

Puzzle numbers: _____

Grown-ups: only I and X are ever taken away, and only from the next two symbols up (I from V and X; X from L and C). So V I X can't be "VIX" or "IVX".

3 Practise

A. Write the number.

IX = _____	XI = _____	IV = _____
XL = _____	LX = _____	XC = _____

The take-away rule

Name _____ Date _____

B. Split each number into parts, then write it. The first one is done for you.

XIV

X + IV = 10 + 4 = **14**

XXIX

____ + ____ = ____

XLI

____ + ____ = ____

LXIV

____ + ____ = ____

XCV

____ + ____ = ____

XCIX

____ + ____ = ____

C. These signs break the rule of three. Write them the Roman way.

- **IIII** (4) → _____
- **VIIII** (9) → _____
- **XXXX** (40) → _____
- **XIIII** (14) → _____

D. True or false? Tick one.

	True	False
IV = 6		
IX = 9		
XL = 60		
XC = 90		

Challenge

Ava reads **IV** as **6**. She says, "I is 1 and V is 5, and 1 + 5 = 6." What would you tell her?

I can…

Tick when you can.

- ☐ explain why IV is 4 but VI is 6
- ☐ read IV, IX, XL and XC
- ☐ spot numerals that break the rules, like IIII