









# THE ROMAN CALENDAR – MONTHS AND DAYS

Although there were some similarities between the Roman calendar and our own, they were not exactly the same. Here you can learn how to give the date like a Roman.

## A. Months

It took lots of experimentation before they found something that worked, but finally the Romans settled on a calendar which had 365 days in a year, a leap year every four years, and 12 months. This system was first introduced by Julius Caesar in 45 BC, which is why we call it the **Julian Calendar**.

JANUARIUS	FEBRUARIUS	MARTIUS	APRILIS	MAIUS	JUNIUS
					
Named in honour of the Janus, the two-faced god of ending and beginnings	Named after the <i>februa</i> , a purification festival which happened in this month	Named in honour of Mars, the Roman god of war	Named as the month in which the flowers opened (from the Latin <i>aperire</i> – to open)	Named in honour of the nymph Maia, a goddess of growth	Named in honour of Juno, Queen of the gods
JULIUS	AUGUSTUS	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
		7 VII	8 VIII	9 IX	10 X
Named in honour of Julius Caesar, who introduced the Julian calendar	Named in honour of Augustus, one of the first Roman emperors	<i>Septem-</i> , <i>Octo-</i> , <i>Novem-</i> and <i>Decem-</i> are the Latin for 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> . This is a bit confusing because they are actually the 9 <sup>th</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> months of the year in the Julian calendar!  Long ago, the very early Romans had used a ten month calendar which began with March. In those days, September really was the 7 <sup>th</sup> month. Later, when Januarius and Februarius were added, these four months kept their old names.			

### Exercise 1:

1. What Roman month are we in today?
2. What Roman month were you born in?
3. Do you know the names of the months in any other languages? Are they similar or different from the Roman names?
4. Take some time to look at the Roman months, and then cover them up. Can you remember what they were called and why?

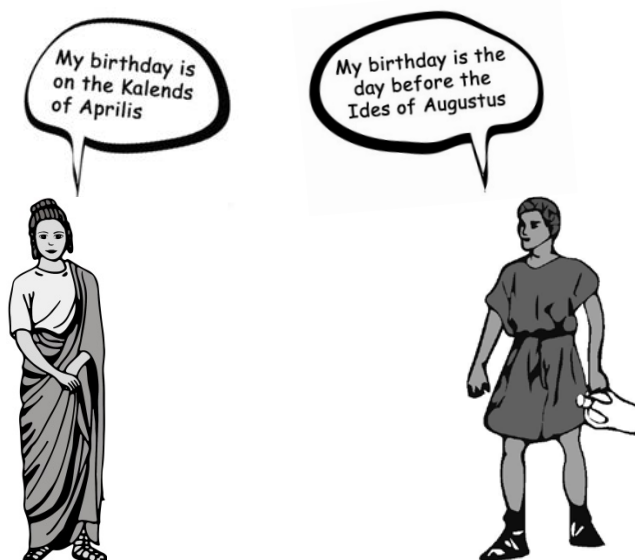
## B. Days

Instead of describing the date as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and so on, the Romans used a very different system. There were **three** special days in every month:

- The **Kalends**: the first day of the month, when the moon was thin crescent
- The **Nones**: a day in the first week of the month when the moon was a quarter-full
- The **Ides**: a day near the middle of the month when the moon was round and full



Romans described dates by saying how close they were to one of these special days.



### Exercise 2:

1. What English word, connected with dates, comes from the Latin word *Kalends*?
2. What modern celebrations happen on these days:
  - a. The Kalends of Januarius
  - b. The Kalends of Aprilis
  - c. The Kalends of Maius
3. Which famous Roman was murdered on the Ides of Martius?

This is how a Roman would have described the dates in the month of Januarius.

In Januarius, the Kalends is on the 1<sup>st</sup>, the Nones is on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and the Ides is on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Eagle Eyes Question:**  
Something funny is going on with the Roman numerals here. Can you see what it is?



## JANVARIUS

1 <sup>st</sup> Januarius <b>The Kalends of Januarius</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> IV days before the Nones of Januarius	3 <sup>rd</sup> III days before the Nones of Januarius	4 <sup>th</sup> The day before the Nones of Januarius	5 <sup>th</sup> <b>The Nones of Januarius</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> VIII days before the Ides of Januarius	7 <sup>th</sup> VII days before the Ides of Januarius
8 <sup>th</sup> VI days before the Ides of Januarius	9 <sup>th</sup> V days before the Ides of Januarius	10 <sup>th</sup> IV days before the Ides of Januarius	11 <sup>th</sup> III days before the Ides of Januarius	12 <sup>th</sup> The day before the Ides of Januarius	13 <sup>th</sup> <b>The Ides of Januarius</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> XIX days before the Kalends of Februrarius
15 <sup>th</sup> XVIII days before the Kalends of Februrarius	16 <sup>th</sup> XVII days before the Kalends of Februrarius	17 <sup>th</sup> XVI days before the Kalends of Februrarius	18 <sup>th</sup> XV days before the Kalends of Februrarius	19 <sup>th</sup> XIV days before the Kalends of Februrarius	20 <sup>th</sup> XIII days before the Kalends of Februrarius	21 <sup>st</sup> XII days before the Kalends of Februrarius
22 <sup>nd</sup> XI days before the Kalends of Februrarius	23 <sup>rd</sup> X days before the Kalends of Februrarius	24 <sup>th</sup> IX days before the Kalends of Februrarius	25 <sup>th</sup> VIII days before the Kalends of Februrarius	26 <sup>th</sup> VII days before the Kalends of Februrarius	27 <sup>th</sup> VI days before the Kalends of Februrarius	28 <sup>th</sup> V days before the Kalends of Februrarius
29 <sup>th</sup> IV days before the Kalends of Februrarius	30 <sup>th</sup> III days before the Kalends of Februrarius	31 <sup>st</sup> The day before the Kalends of Februrarius	1 <sup>st</sup> Februrarius <b>The Kalends of Februrarius</b>			

### Exercise 3:

Turns these modern dates into Roman ones:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> January
- 13<sup>th</sup> January
- 15<sup>th</sup> January
- 28<sup>th</sup> January
- 30<sup>st</sup> January

### Exercise 4:

Turn these Roman dates into modern ones.

- The day before the Ides of Januarius
- XIV days before the Kalends of Februrarius
- III days before the Nones of Januarius
- VIII days before the Kalends of Februrarius
- The Kalends of Januarius

**Eagle Eyes Answer:** The Romans didn't count in the same way we do. They counted 'inclusively'.

When counting back to work out a date, they included the day they started on in their counting. So while the day before the Ides was described in words as 'the day before the Ides', the day before *that* was described as 'III days before the Ides'!

### Exercise 5 – Your Roman birthday:

Unfortunately, there's a catch! The Nones and Ides were not on the same day every month, as some months were long (31 days) and some were short (29). As in our calendar, February was the odd one out with 28 days. The Romans had to learn the rules by heart.

To find out when your birthday is in the Roman Calendar, find the right grid for your month and follow the instructions:

#### 31 Days Long: Martius, Maius, Julius, October:

1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
29 <sup>th</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>			

- Put the *Kalends* on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month, and the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next month
- Put the *Nones* on 7<sup>th</sup>
- Put the *Ides* on 15<sup>th</sup>
- Mark your birthday, and count back from the next 'marker' day. Don't forget to count inclusively!

#### 29 Days Long: Januarius, Aprilis, Junius, Augustus, September, November, December:

1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
29 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>					

- Put the *Kalends* on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month, and the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next month
- Put the *Nones* on 5<sup>th</sup>
- Put the *Ides* on 13<sup>th</sup>
- Mark your birthday, and count back from the next 'marker' day. Don't forget to count inclusively!

#### 28 Days Long: Februarius

1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	27 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
1 <sup>st</sup>						

- Put the *Kalends* on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month, and the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next month
- Put the *Nones* on 5<sup>th</sup>
- Put the *Ides* on 13<sup>th</sup>
- Mark your birthday, and count back from the next 'marker' day. Don't forget to count inclusively!

#### Exercise 5 [10 marks]:

Turns these modern dates into Roman ones:

1. 3rd May
2. 12th April
3. 17th February
4. 28th July
5. 7th November
6. 13th October
7. 5th March
8. 21st June
9. 15th July
10. 29th September

#### Extension Exercise:

Make a wall calendar showing the Roman dates for each month, and illustrate each with a suitable picture.