

## Roman Numerals on Roman Tombstones

Roman Numerals	I	V	X	L	C	D	M
Indo-Arabic Numerals	1	5	10	50	100	500	1,000

When a Roman died, a tombstone was set up to mark the grave. On it was written the name of the person and how long he/she had lived.

In Latin, the phrase *vixit annos*, followed by a numeral, means 'he (or she) lived for ... years'. Sometimes the stone-carver shortened this to *vix. ann.* or sometimes even just *V. A.*

### Exercise 1:

Look at these tombstones. How old were each of these Romans when they died?

1  
LUCIUS AEMILIUS  
RUFUS  
VIXIT ANNOS XXIX

2  
FLAVIA MINOR  
VIX. ANN. LXXI

3  
MANIUS  
CLAUDIUS  
GALLUS  
V. A. XLIV

4  
DECIMUS  
VALERIUS  
LENTULUS  
VIXIT  
ANNOS  
XIII

5  
HORTENSIA  
COLUMBANA  
V. A. XXXVI

6  
LUCRETIA TERTIA  
VIXIT ANNOS XCI

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to the number of years, sometimes Roman tombstones also tell us how many months, days, or even hours a person lived. These are the words to look out for:

menses or m. – *months*

dies or d. – *days*

horis or h. – *hours*

As with V.A., the numeral comes *afterwards*, so *M.X* means ‘ten months’

### Exercise 2:

Look at these tombstones. How old were each of these Romans when they died?

(These are based on *real* tombstones in the Ashmolean Museum collection, and show the names and ages of real Romans.)

1  
QUINTUS  
MUNATIDIUS GALLUS  
VIX. ANN. V DIES. II

2 IANUARIUS  
VIXIT  
ANNOS XXII  
MENSES V

3  
LUCIUS  
POMPEIUS  
MARCELLINUS  
VIXIT  
ANNOS XXIII  
M. V  
DIES XI

4 GRESIUS  
APOLAUSTUS  
V. A. X  
M. XI D. XVIII

5  
CLAUDIUS  
SUPERUS  
V. A. XIII M. VII

6  
LUCIUS ANNAIUS FIRMIUS  
VIXIT ANNOS V M. II . D. VI H. VI

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 3:

How would you tell a Roman your age using V.A., M., D. and H.?