

## DAYS OF THE WEEK

For most of their history, the Romans didn't have a week as we understand it, though they did have a market day every eight days. Then, in AD321, the Emperor Constantine introduced a new seven-day week, with Sunday as the first day.

The Romans believed that the Sun and the Moon were planets and thought that there were seven planets altogether. The planets had been named after Roman gods and goddesses, and the days of the week were named after the seven planets:

Sunday	<i>dies Solis</i> (Sun day)
Monday	<i>dies Lunae</i> (Moon day)
Tuesday	<i>dies Martis</i> (day of Mars)
Wednesday	<i>dies Mercurii</i> (day of Mercury)
Thursday	<i>dies Jovis</i> (day of Jove or Jupiter)
Friday	<i>dies Veneris</i> (day of Venus)
Saturday	<i>dies Saturni</i> (day of Saturn)

The Romans named Friday "*dies Veneris*", after the planet Venus.

## ROMAN NUMERALS

Roman numerals are made up of a combination of the letters I, V, X, L, C, D and M. They follow a logical pattern, based on addition and subtraction. For example, 4 is written IV, meaning 1 less than 5 (V); 7 is VII, meaning 5 (V) plus 2 (II). However, this way of writing numerals meant that many numbers became extremely long. For example, the Romans needed 7 letters to write the number 78:



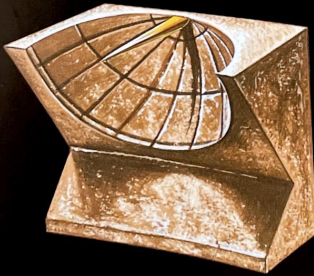
### GUIDE TO ROMAN NUMERALS

1	I	11	XI	25	XXV
2	II	12	XII	50	L
3	III	13	XIII	75	LXXV
4	IV	14	XIV	100	C
5	V	15	XV	200	CC
6	VI	16	XVI	500	D
7	VII	17	XVII	700	DCC
8	VIII	18	XVIII	1000	M
9	IX	19	XIX	-1500	MD
10	X	20	XX	2000	MM

## TELLING THE TIME

The early Romans had no way of telling the exact time of day so they had to rely on the Sun's position in the sky. Only three points in the day could be accurately known - sunrise, midday and sunset. The Romans divided the day into two parts on either side of midday, or *meridies*. The time before midday was called *ante meridiem* (a.m.), and the time after midday was *post meridiem* (p.m.) - terms that we still use today to describe the times before and after noon.

Sundials were set up in public squares so that people could check the time.



By the mid-3rd century BC, the Romans were using sundials to tell the time. Each day lasted as long as the daylight and was divided into 12 hours, with midday at the end of the sixth hour. The Romans didn't use minutes, and because the hours of daylight varied over the year, an hour was much longer in the summer than in the winter. The night was also divided into 12 hours, and summer nights were much shorter than winter nights.