

Roman Numerals

The Romans did not count or write numbers the same way we do. They wrote numbers using the Roman numerals I, V, X, L, C, D, M. The numerals have the following meanings:

I	=	1
V	=	5
X	=	10
L	=	50
C	=	100
D	=	500
M	=	1000

To write a number, the Romans simply combined the Roman numerals so that they added up to the number they wanted. The numbers 1 through 3 are written using Roman numerals as follows:

1	=	I
2	=	II
3	=	III

To write the number 4, some people wrote IIII and others wrote IV, which means “subtract I from V”, that is, subtract 1 from 5 to get 4. In a similar way, the number 40 was written as either XXXX or XL. So, to count to 20, here’s what the Romans did:

1	=	I	11	=	XI
2	=	II	12	=	XII
3	=	III	13	=	XIII
4	=	IIII or IV	14	=	XIIII or XIV
5	=	V	15	=	XV
6	=	VI	16	=	XVI
7	=	VII	17	=	XVII
8	=	VIII	18	=	XVIII
9	=	VIIII or IX	19	=	XVIIII or XIX
10	=	X	20	=	XX

Write your age using Roman numerals:

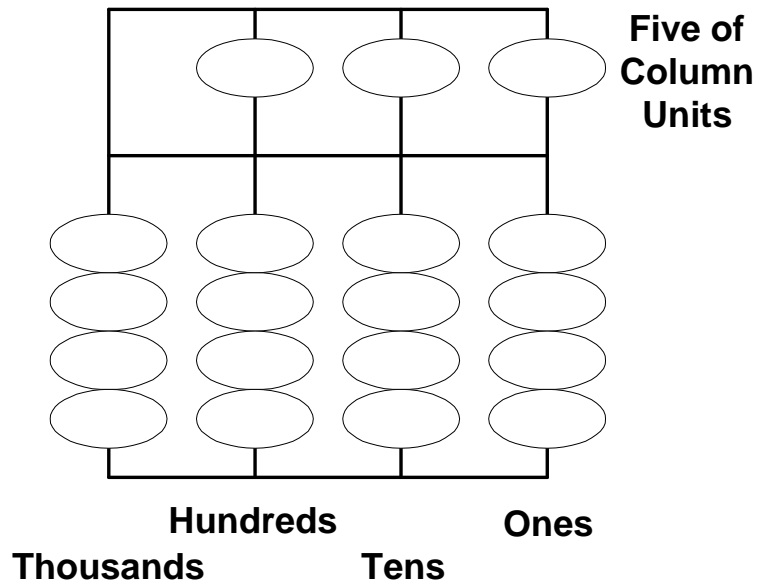
Write your age plus 15 using Roman numerals:

Write your teacher’s age (45) using Roman numerals:

Write the year 2001 using Roman numerals:

Simple Soroban

A Soroban is a Japanese abacus. Pictured below is a simple Soroban of the type used by young children while learning how to use the abacus.



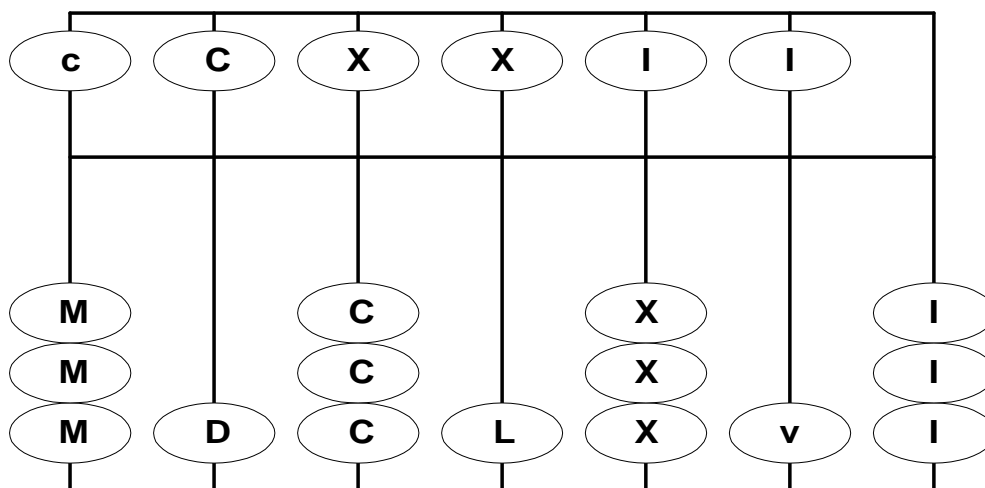
Such a Soroban can be used for Base 10 arithmetic (the number system we use) or for the kind of Roman Numerals that use “III” to represent a four. It cannot easily be used for the kind of Roman Numerals that use “IV” to represent a four.

Draw a picture below of a Soroban set to represent 1234.

Now, draw a picture of a Soroban set to represent MDCCCCLXXXVIII

Special Roman Numeral Soroban

A Soroban used for the type of Roman Numerals that represent a four as “IV” is more complicated than a simple Soroban. Pictured below is a Soroban that can be used for these kinds of Roman Numerals.



Subtract values above the middle line from values below the middle line

Draw a picture below of a Soroban set to represent 1234.

Now, draw a picture of a Soroban set to represent MDCCCCLXXXVIII