

23. The Roman Calendar

- Twelve months in the year.
- Number of days in each month – as with us; so one has to remember “30 days hath September” etc
- Three points of reference
Kalendae – always the 1st - fem. Pl. nouns (derivations obscure
Nonae – usually the 5th and unhelpful!
Idus – usually the 13th
- Names of months
Ianuarius
Februarius
Martius
Aprilis (3rd declension)
Maius
Iunius
Quintilis (3rd declension) / Iulius (after Caesar)
Sextilis (3rd declension) / Augustus (after Emperor Augustus)
September (3rd declension)
October (3rd declension)
November (3rd declension)
December (3rd declension)
- These are adjectives, e.g. Kalendae Ianuariae, Nonae Apriles, Idus Novembres.
- Dates between the three points are reckoned backwards from the point ahead and inclusively.
So –
For **January 2nd** go ahead to Nones, i.e. 5th and count back 5,4,3,2; result **4 days before the Nones**
For **February 8th** go ahead to the Ides, i.e. 13th and count back 13,12,11,10,9,8; result **6 days before the Ides**
For **April 22nd** go ahead to Kalends of May, and count back 1,30,29,28,27,26,25,24,23,22; result **10 days before the Kalends.**
- Perversely, the dates of the Nones and Ides were different in the case of four months. The jingle I learnt is:
 ”March, July, October, May
 makes Nones the 7th, Ides the 15th day”
hence “On May 7th” is “Nonis Maiis”
 On Mach 15th” is “Idibus Martiis”
For **July 3rd** go ahead to the Nones (i.e. the 7th) and count back 7,6,5,4,3: result **5 days before the Nones.**
For **October 12th** go ahead to the Ides (i.e. the 15th) and count back 15,14,13,12; result **4 days before the Ides**
For **May 3rd** go ahead to the Nones (i.e. the 7th) and count back 7,6,5,4,3; result **5 days before the Nones.**
For **March 28th** go ahead to the Kalends of April and count back 1,31,30,29,28; result **5 days before the Kalends.**
- **N.B.** The last day of every month was counted as the day before the Kalends of the next month; thus November 30th was the day before the Kalends of December. In a leap year, February 24th was counted twice.
- There were three ways of expressing dates; thus taking “**on the 29th April**” the commonest way in Cicero and Livy was “**ante diem tertium Kal(endas) Mai(as)** (remember – inclusive counting) or **a.d. iiii Kal. Mai.**
”Apparently this was once “**ante die tertio Kalendas Maias**” i.e. “**before the Kalends of May on the 3rd day**”, and then the ablative was attracted into the accusative. Anyhow, a.d. or ante diem came to be treated as an indeclinable noun, and so one finds ad, in and ex prefixed to it, e.g. “**ad a.d. iv Kal.Oct.**” – “**up to the 28th September**”). Another way was to use the ablative of time: “**tertio die ante Kal. Mai.**” Even more abbreviated was “**tertio Kal. Mai.**”
- For the last day of every month the Romans said “**pridie Kalendas...**” and the appropriate adjective. In a leap year February 24th was counted twice, the second day being called “**bissextus**”.