Scripts and Symbols:

One important effect of the Crusades was to revolutionize mathematics in Western Europe by spreading the use of Arabic numerals. Until then, most traders, merchants, and others who worked with numbers had used Roman numerals. This made complex calculations difficult, because the Latin system did not use zero or placeholders. Only experts would multiply, divide, and figure out square roots.

Through Arabic numerals, which had developed from a system used by the Hindus in India, were known in Europe in the tenth century, they came into common use as a result of the Crusades – and they are still used today.

Roman Numerals: I II III IV V

Arabic Numerals: 1 2 3 4 5