If you are at SIXES and SEVENS with regard to Roman numbers, note that the SIX contains a 9 and the SEVEN, a 5. Some of our other numbers have Roman figures in them, too. There is a 4 in FIVE, for instance, a 1 in EIGHT and NINE, and a 55 in ELEVEN and TWELVE.

Here is a short quiz involving the detection of Roman numbers in English words; answers can be found in Answers and Solutions.

1. Add two vowels to Roman 1006 and come up with a Hollywood product.
2. Add Roman 1009 to a scramble of TRUE, and come up with a blend.
3. King James, or Authorized Version of the Bible, First Year of Publication Explicitly Concealed. The Roman numbers spelling out this year can be found in order in the above phrase, known as a Chronogram; can you find them?
4. Go into a pigpen with nine, and come out with three score in line.
5. Take a thousand and add one, then a thousand more; follow this with ninety-nine, and a clown you’ll score.

If you’re looking for one in a MILLION, there it is, of course, in two places, along with two fifties and a grand. And our title, incidentally, means more than you think: the line over the Roman figures signifies multiplication by a thousand.

Editor’s Note: The Chronogram is an ancient form of wordplay described briefly in C. C. Bombaugh’s Oddities and Curiosities of Words and Literature (Dover reprint, 1961). It was often used on German medals to denote the year of coinage. For example, a medal of Gustavus Adolphus contained the Latin inscription CHRISTVS DUX ERGO TRIVMPHVS, which contains the sequence MDCXVII, or 1627, the year in which the medal was issued. Addison comments amusingly on this Teutonic predilection:

Your laborious German wits will turn over a whole dictionary for one of these ingenious devices. A man would think they were searching after an apt classical term; but instead of that they are looking out a word that has an L, an M, or a D, in it. When therefore we meet with any of these inscriptions, we are not so much to look in them for the thought as for the year of the Lord.