

The Circle

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Abstract—Solved problems from JEE mains papers related to 2D circles in coordinate geometry are available in this document. These problems are solved using linear algebra/matrix analysis.

- 1 A circle passes through the points $\mathbf{A} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 3 \end{pmatrix}$ and $\mathbf{B} = \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix}$. If its centre \mathbf{O} lies on the line

$$(-1 \ 4)\mathbf{x} - 3 = 0 \quad (1.1)$$

find its radius.

Solution: Let

$$\mathbf{C} = \frac{\mathbf{A} + \mathbf{B}}{2} \Rightarrow \mathbf{C} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \quad (1.2)$$

The direction vector of AB is

$$\mathbf{m} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 3 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} \quad (1.3)$$

$$\therefore OC \perp AB,$$

$$\begin{aligned} OC : \mathbf{m}^T (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{C}) &= 0 \\ \Rightarrow (1 \ 1)\mathbf{x} &= 7 \end{aligned} \quad (1.4)$$

Thus, \mathbf{O} is the intersection of (1.1) and (1.4) and is the solution of the matrix equation

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ -1 & 4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} \quad (1.5)$$

From the augmented matrix,

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 7 \\ -1 & 4 & -3 \end{pmatrix} &\leftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 7 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \leftrightarrow \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 5 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \\ \Rightarrow \mathbf{O} &= \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned} \quad (1.6)$$

Thus the radius of the circle

$$OA = \|\mathbf{O} - \mathbf{A}\| = \sqrt{10} \quad (1.7)$$

- 2 If a circle C_1 , whose radius is 3, touches externally the circle

$$C_2 : \mathbf{x}^T \mathbf{x} + (2 \ -4)\mathbf{x} = 4 \quad (2.1)$$

at the point $\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$, then find the length of the intercept cut by this circle C on the x -axis.

Solution: From (2.1), the centre of C_2 is

$$\mathbf{O}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} -1 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.2)$$

The radius of the circle is given by

$$r_2^2 - \mathbf{O}_2^T \mathbf{O}_2 = 4 \Rightarrow r_2 = 3 \quad (2.3)$$

Since the radius of C_1 is $r_1 = r_2 = 3$ and $\mathbf{O}_1, \mathbf{P}, \mathbf{O}_2$ are collinear,

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\mathbf{O}_1 + \mathbf{O}_2}{2} &= \mathbf{P} \\ \Rightarrow \mathbf{O}_1 &= 2\mathbf{P} - \mathbf{O}_2 \\ \Rightarrow \mathbf{O}_1 &= \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned} \quad (2.4)$$

The intercepts of C_1 on the x -axis can be expressed as

$$\mathbf{x} = \lambda \mathbf{m} \quad (2.5)$$

where

$$\mathbf{m} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (2.6)$$

Substituting in the equation for C_1 ,

$$\|\lambda \mathbf{m} - \mathbf{O}_1\|^2 = r_1^2 \quad (2.7)$$

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which can be expressed as

$$\lambda^2 \|\mathbf{m}\|^2 - 2\lambda \mathbf{m}^T \mathbf{O}_1 + \|\mathbf{O}_1\|^2 - r_1^2 = 0$$

$$\implies \lambda^2 - 10\lambda + 20 = 0 \quad (2.8)$$

resulting in

$$\lambda = 5 \pm \sqrt{5} \quad (2.9)$$

after substituting from (2.6) and (2.4).

3 A line drawn through the point

$$\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ 7 \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.1)$$

cuts the circle

$$C : \mathbf{x}^T \mathbf{x} = 9 \quad (3.2)$$

at the points **A** and **B**. Find $PA.PB$.

Solution: Since the points **P**, **A**, **B** are collinear, the line PAB can be expressed as

$$L : \mathbf{x} = \mathbf{P} + \lambda \mathbf{m} \quad (3.3)$$

for $\|\mathbf{m}\| = 1$. The intersection of L and C yields

$$(\mathbf{P} + \lambda \mathbf{m})(\mathbf{P} + \lambda \mathbf{m}) = 9$$

$$\implies \lambda^2 + 2\lambda \mathbf{m}^T \mathbf{P} + \|\mathbf{P}\|^2 - 9 = 0 \quad (3.4)$$

The product of the roots in (3.4) is

$$PA.PB = \|\mathbf{P}\|^2 - 9 = 56 \quad (3.5)$$

4 Find the equation of the circle C_2 , which is the mirror image of the circle

$$C_1 : \mathbf{x}^T \mathbf{x} - (2 \ 0) \mathbf{x} = 0 \quad (4.1)$$

in the line

$$L : (1 \ 1) \mathbf{x} = 3. \quad (4.2)$$

Solution: From (4.1), circle C_1 has centre at

$$\mathbf{O}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.3)$$

and radius

$$r_1 = \mathbf{O}_1^T \mathbf{O}_1 = 1 \quad (4.4)$$

The centre of C_2 is the reflection of \mathbf{O}_1 about L and is obtained as

$$\frac{\mathbf{O}_2}{2} = \frac{\mathbf{m}\mathbf{m}^T - \mathbf{n}\mathbf{n}^T}{\mathbf{m}^T \mathbf{m} + \mathbf{n}^T \mathbf{n}} \mathbf{O}_1 + c \frac{\mathbf{n}}{\|\mathbf{n}\|} \quad (4.5)$$

where the relevant parameters are obtained

from (4.2) as

$$\mathbf{n} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \mathbf{m} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, c = 3. \quad (4.6)$$

Substituting the above in (4.5),

$$\frac{\mathbf{O}_2}{2} = \frac{\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}}{4} \mathbf{O}_1 + c \frac{\mathbf{n}}{\sqrt{2}}$$

$$\implies \mathbf{O}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} \sqrt{2} \\ 1 - \sqrt{2} \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.7)$$

Thus

$$C_2 : \left\| \mathbf{x} - \begin{pmatrix} \sqrt{2} \\ 1 - \sqrt{2} \end{pmatrix} \right\| = 1 \quad (4.8)$$

5 Find the locus of the centres of those circles which touch the circle

$$C : \mathbf{x}^T \mathbf{x} - 8 \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 4 \quad (5.1)$$

and also touch the x -axis.

Solution: C has centre at

$$\mathbf{O} = 4 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \quad (5.2)$$

Let \mathbf{y} be the centre of the desired circle. If \mathbf{p} be the point of contact, since \mathbf{y} , \mathbf{p} , \mathbf{O} are collinear,

$$\mathbf{p} = \frac{\mathbf{y} + \mathbf{O}}{2} \quad (5.3)$$

Since the circle touches the x -axis, the x -axis is its tangent.

6 One of the diameters of the circle, given by

$$C : \mathbf{x}^T \mathbf{x} + 2 \begin{pmatrix} -2 & 3 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 12 \quad (6.1)$$

is a chord of a circle S , whose centre is at

$$\mathbf{O}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (6.2)$$

Find the radius of S .

Solution: From (6.1), the centre of C is

$$\mathbf{O}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} \quad (6.3)$$

and the radius is

$$r_1 = \sqrt{\mathbf{O}_1^T \mathbf{O}_1} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} \quad (6.4)$$

7 A circle passes through

$$\begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \quad (7.1)$$

and touches the y-axis at

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (7.2)$$

Which one of the following equations can represent a diameter of this circle?

- a) $\begin{pmatrix} 4 & 5 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 6$
- b) $\begin{pmatrix} 2 & -3 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} + 10 = 0$
- c) $\begin{pmatrix} 3 & 4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 3$
- d) $\begin{pmatrix} 5 & 2 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} + 4 = 0$

8 Find the equation of the tangent to the circle, at the point

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (8.1)$$

whose centre is the point of intersection of the straight lines

$$\begin{pmatrix} 2 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 3 \quad (8.2)$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{x} = 1 \quad (8.3)$$