(d) Computer graphics. To visualize a three-dimensional object with plane faces (e.g., a cube), we may store the position vectors of the vertices with respect to a suitable $x_1x_2x_3$-coordinate system (and a list of the connecting edges) and then obtain a two-dimensional image on a video screen by projecting the object onto a coordinate plane, for instance, onto the x_1x_2-plane by setting $x_3 = 0$. To change the appearance of the image, we can impose a linear transformation on the position vectors stored. Show that a diagonal matrix $\mathbf{D}$ with main diagonal entries 3, 1, $\frac{1}{2}$ gives from an $\mathbf{x} = [x_j]$ the new position vector $\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{Dx}$, where $y_1 = 3x_1$ (stretch in the x_1-direction by a factor 3), $y_2 = x_2$ (unchanged), $y_3 = \frac{1}{2}x_3$ (contraction in the x_3-direction). What effect would a scalar matrix have?

(e) Rotations in space. Explain $\mathbf{y} = \mathbf{Ax}$ geometrically when $\mathbf{A}$ is one of the three matrices

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \cos\theta & -\sin\theta \\ 0 & \sin\theta & \cos\theta \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \cos\varphi & 0 & -\sin\varphi \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ \sin\varphi & 0 & \cos\varphi \end{bmatrix}, \quad \begin{bmatrix} \cos\psi & -\sin\psi & 0 \\ \sin\psi & \cos\psi & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

What effect would these transformations have in situations such as that described in (d)?

7.3 Linear Systems of Equations. Gauss Elimination

We now come to one of the most important use of matrices, that is, using matrices to solve systems of linear equations. We showed informally, in Example 1 of Sec. 7.1, how to represent the information contained in a system of linear equations by a matrix, called the augmented matrix. This matrix will then be used in solving the linear system of equations. Our approach to solving linear systems is called the Gauss elimination method. Since this method is so fundamental to linear algebra, the student should be alert.

A shorter term for systems of linear equations is just **linear systems**. Linear systems model many applications in engineering, economics, statistics, and many other areas. Electrical networks, traffic flow, and commodity markets may serve as specific examples of applications.

Linear System, Coefficient Matrix, Augmented Matrix

A **linear system of *m* equations in *n* unknowns** $x_1, \cdots, x_n$ is a set of equations of the form

$$\begin{aligned} a_{11}x_1 + \cdots + a_{1n}x_n &= b_1 \\ a_{21}x_1 + \cdots + a_{2n}x_n &= b_2 \\ \cdots\cdots\cdots&\cdots\cdots\cdots \\ a_{m1}x_1 + \cdots + a_{mn}x_n &= b_m. \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

The system is called *linear* because each variable x_j appears in the first power only, just as in the equation of a straight line. $a_{11}, \cdots, a_{mn}$ are given numbers, called the **coefficients** of the system. $b_1, \cdots, b_m$ on the right are also given numbers. If all the b_j are zero, then (1) is called a **homogeneous system**. If at least one b_j is not zero, then (1) is called a **nonhomogeneous system**.

A **solution** of (1) is a set of numbers $x_1, \cdots, x_n$ that satisfies all the m equations. A **solution vector** of (1) is a vector $\mathbf{x}$ whose components form a solution of (1). If the system (1) is homogeneous, it always has at least the **trivial solution** $x_1 = 0, \cdots, x_n = 0$.

Matrix Form of the Linear System (1). From the definition of matrix multiplication we see that the m equations of (1) may be written as a single vector equation

$$\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b} \tag{2}$$

where the **coefficient matrix** $\mathbf{A} = [a_{jk}]$ is the $m \times n$ matrix

$$\mathbf{A} = \begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & \cdots & a_{2n} \\ \cdot & \cdot & \cdots & \cdot \\ a_{m1} & a_{m2} & \cdots & a_{mn} \end{bmatrix}, \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ \cdot \\ \cdot \\ \cdot \\ x_n \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{b} = \begin{bmatrix} b_1 \\ \vdots \\ b_m \end{bmatrix}$$

are column vectors. We assume that the coefficients a_{jk} are not all zero, so that $\mathbf{A}$ is not a zero matrix. Note that $\mathbf{x}$ has n components, whereas $\mathbf{b}$ has m components. The matrix

$$\tilde{\mathbf{A}} = \left[\begin{array}{ccc|c} a_{11} & \cdots & a_{1n} & b_1 \\ \cdot & \cdots & \cdot & \cdot \\ \cdot & \cdots & \cdot & \cdot \\ a_{m1} & \cdots & a_{mn} & b_m \end{array}\right]$$

is called the **augmented matrix** of the system (1). The dashed vertical line could be omitted, as we shall do later. It is merely a reminder that the last column of $\tilde{\mathbf{A}}$ did not come from matrix $\mathbf{A}$ but came from vector $\mathbf{b}$. Thus, we *augmented* the matrix $\mathbf{A}$.

*Note that **the augmented matrix** $\tilde{\mathbf{A}}$ **determines the system (1) completely*** because it contains all the given numbers appearing in (1).

EXAMPLE 1 **Geometric Interpretation. Existence and Uniqueness of Solutions**

If $m = n = 2$, we have two equations in two unknowns x_1, x_2

$$a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 = b_1$$
$$a_{21}x_1 + a_{22}x_2 = b_2.$$

If we interpret x_1, x_2 as coordinates in the x_1x_2-plane, then each of the two equations represents a straight line, and (x_1, x_2) is a solution if and only if the point P with coordinates x_1, x_2 lies on both lines. Hence there are three possible cases (see Fig. 158 on next page):

(*a*) Precisely one solution if the lines intersect

(*b*) Infinitely many solutions if the lines coincide

(*c*) No solution if the lines are parallel

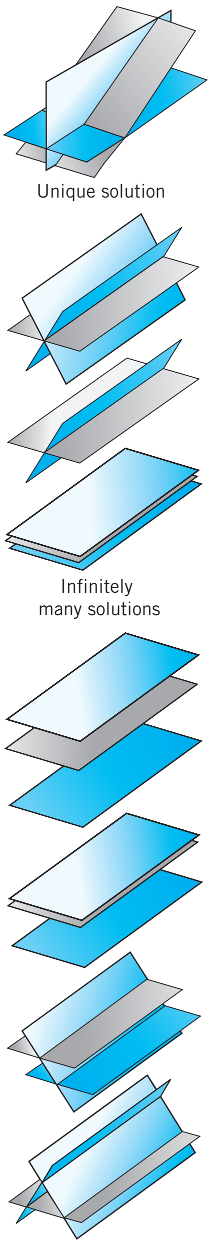
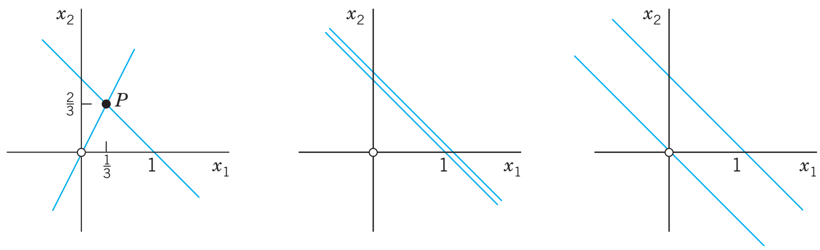


Fig. 158. Three equations in three unknowns interpreted as planes in space

For instance,

$x_1 + x_2 = 1$	$x_1 + x_2 = 1$	$x_1 + x_2 = 1$
$2x_1 - x_2 = 0$	$2x_1 + 2x_2 = 2$	$x_1 + x_2 = 0$
Case (a)	Case (b)	Case (c)



If the system is homogenous, Case (c) cannot happen, because then those two straight lines pass through the origin, whose coordinates (0, 0) constitute the trivial solution. Similarly, our present discussion can be extended from two equations in two unknowns to three equations in three unknowns. We give the geometric interpretation of three possible cases concerning solutions in Fig. 158. Instead of straight lines we have planes and the solution depends on the positioning of these planes in space relative to each other. The student may wish to come up with some specific examples. ■

Our simple example illustrated that a system (1) may have no solution. This leads to such questions as: Does a given system (1) have a solution? Under what conditions does it have precisely one solution? If it has more than one solution, how can we characterize the set of all solutions? We shall consider such questions in Sec. 7.5.

First, however, let us discuss an important systematic method for solving linear systems.

Gauss Elimination and Back Substitution

The Gauss elimination method can be motivated as follows. Consider a linear system that is in ***triangular form*** (in full, *upper* triangular form) such as

$$\begin{aligned} 2x_1 + 5x_2 &= 2 \\ 13x_2 &= -26 \end{aligned}$$

(*Triangular* means that all the nonzero entries of the corresponding coefficient matrix lie above the diagonal and form an upside-down 90° triangle.) Then we can solve the system by **back substitution**, that is, we solve the last equation for the variable, $x_2 = -26/13 = -2$, and then work backward, substituting $x_2 = -2$ into the first equation and solving it for x_1, obtaining $x_1 = \frac{1}{2}(2 - 5x_2) = \frac{1}{2}(2 - 5 \cdot (-2)) = 6$. This gives us the idea of first reducing a general system to triangular form. For instance, let the given system be

$$\begin{aligned} 2x_1 + 5x_2 &= 2 \\ -4x_1 + 3x_2 &= -30. \end{aligned} \qquad \text{Its augmented matrix is} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 5 & 2 \\ -4 & 3 & -30 \end{bmatrix}.$$

We leave the first equation as it is. We eliminate x_1 from the second equation, to get a triangular system. For this we add twice the first equation to the second, and we do the same operation on the ***rows*** of the augmented matrix. This gives $-4x_1 + 4x_1 + 3x_2 + 10x_2 = -30 + 2 \cdot 2$, that is,

$$\begin{aligned} 2x_1 + 5x_2 &= 2 \\ 13x_2 &= -26 \end{aligned} \qquad \begin{array}{r} \\ \text{Row 2} + 2 \text{ Row 1} \end{array} \quad \begin{bmatrix} 2 & 5 & 2 \\ 0 & 13 & -26 \end{bmatrix}$$

where Row 2 + 2 Row 1 means "Add twice Row 1 to Row 2" in the original matrix. This is the **Gauss elimination** (for 2 equations in 2 unknowns) giving the triangular form, from which back substitution now yields $x_2 = -2$ and $x_1 = 6$, as before.

Since a linear system is completely determined by its augmented matrix, ***Gauss elimination can be done by merely considering the matrices***, as we have just indicated. We do this again in the next example, emphasizing the matrices by writing them first and the equations behind them, just as a help in order not to lose track.

EXAMPLE 2 Gauss Elimination. Electrical Network

Solve the linear system

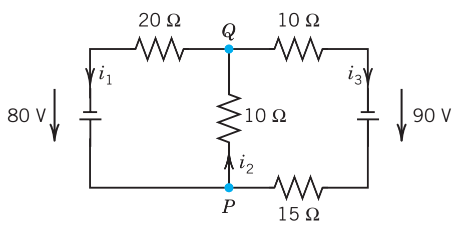
$$\begin{aligned} x_1 - x_2 + x_3 &= 0 \\ -x_1 + x_2 - x_3 &= 0 \\ 10x_2 + 25x_3 &= 90 \\ 20x_1 + 10x_2 &= 80. \end{aligned}$$

Derivation from the circuit in Fig. 159 (Optional). This is the system for the unknown currents $x_1 = i_1$, $x_2 = i_2$, $x_3 = i_3$ in the electrical network in Fig. 159. To obtain it, we label the currents as shown, choosing directions arbitrarily; if a current will come out negative, this will simply mean that the current flows against the direction of our arrow. The current entering each battery will be the same as the current leaving it. The equations for the currents result from Kirchhoff's laws:

Kirchhoff's Current Law (KCL). *At any point of a circuit, the sum of the inflowing currents equals the sum of the outflowing currents.*

Kirchhoff's Voltage Law (KVL). *In any closed loop, the sum of all voltage drops equals the impressed electromotive force.*

Node P gives the first equation, node Q the second, the right loop the third, and the left loop the fourth, as indicated in the figure.



Node P:	$i_1 - i_2 + i_3 = 0$
Node Q:	$-i_1 + i_2 - i_3 = 0$
Right loop:	$10i_2 + 25i_3 = 90$
Left loop:	$20i_1 + 10i_2 = 80$

Fig. 159. Network in Example 2 and equations relating the currents

Solution by Gauss Elimination. This system could be solved rather quickly by noticing its particular form. But this is not the point. The point is that the Gauss elimination is systematic and will work in general, also for large systems. We apply it to our system and then do back substitution. As indicated, let us write the augmented matrix of the system first and then the system itself:

Augmented Matrix $\tilde{\mathbf{A}}$ — Equations

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Pivot 1} \longrightarrow \\ \\ \text{Eliminate} \longrightarrow \\ \\ \end{array} \left[\begin{array}{rrr|r} 1 & -1 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 1 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 25 & 90 \\ 20 & 10 & 0 & 80 \end{array}\right] \qquad \begin{array}{l} \text{Pivot 1} \longrightarrow \\ \\ \text{Eliminate} \longrightarrow \\ \\ \end{array} \begin{aligned} x_1 - x_2 + x_3 &= 0 \\ -x_1 + x_2 - x_3 &= 0 \\ 10x_2 + 25x_3 &= 90 \\ 20x_1 + 10x_2 \qquad &= 80. \end{aligned}$$

Step 1. Elimination of x_1

Call the first row of **A** the **pivot row** and the first equation the **pivot equation**. Call the coefficient 1 of its x_1-term the **pivot** in this step. Use this equation to eliminate x_1 (get rid of x_1) in the other equations. For this, do:

Add 1 times the pivot equation to the second equation.

Add -20 times the pivot equation to the fourth equation.

This corresponds to **row operations** on the augmented matrix as indicated in BLUE behind the ***new matrix*** in (3). So the operations are performed on the ***preceding matrix***. The result is

$$(3) \qquad \left[\begin{array}{rrr|r} 1 & -1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 25 & 90 \\ 0 & 30 & -20 & 80 \end{array}\right] \quad \begin{array}{l} \\ \text{Row 2 + Row 1} \\ \\ \text{Row 4} - 20 \text{ Row 1} \end{array} \quad \begin{aligned} x_1 - x_2 + x_3 &= 0 \\ 0 &= 0 \\ 10x_2 + 25x_3 &= 90 \\ 30x_2 - 20x_3 &= 80. \end{aligned}$$

Step 2. Elimination of x_2

The first equation remains as it is. We want the new second equation to serve as the next pivot equation. But since it has no x_2-term (in fact, it is $0 = 0$), we must first change the order of the equations and the corresponding rows of the new matrix. We put $0 = 0$ at the end and move the third equation and the fourth equation one place up. This is called **partial pivoting** (as opposed to the rarely used *total pivoting*, in which the order of the unknowns is also changed). It gives

$$\begin{array}{l} \\ \text{Pivot 10} \longrightarrow \\ \text{Eliminate 30} \longrightarrow \\ \\ \end{array} \left[\begin{array}{rrr|r} 1 & -1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 25 & 90 \\ 0 & \boxed{30} & -20 & 80 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}\right] \qquad \begin{array}{l} \\ \text{Pivot 10} \longrightarrow \\ \text{Eliminate } 30x_2 \longrightarrow \\ \\ \end{array} \begin{aligned} x_1 - x_2 + x_3 &= 0 \\ 10x_2 + 25x_3 &= 90 \\ \boxed{30x_2} - 20x_3 &= 80 \\ 0 &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

To eliminate x_2, do:

Add -3 times the pivot equation to the third equation.

The result is

$$(4) \qquad \left[\begin{array}{rrr|r} 1 & -1 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 10 & 25 & 90 \\ 0 & 0 & -95 & -190 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}\right] \quad \begin{array}{l} \\ \\ \text{Row 3} - 3 \text{ Row 2} \\ \\ \end{array} \quad \begin{aligned} x_1 - x_2 + x_3 &= 0 \\ 10x_2 + 25x_3 &= 90 \\ -95x_3 &= -190 \\ 0 &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

Back Substitution. ***Determination of x_3, x_2, x_1 (in this order)***

Working backward from the last to the first equation of this "triangular" system (4), we can now readily find x_3, then x_2, and then x_1:

$$\begin{aligned} -95x_3 &= -190 & \qquad x_3 &= i_3 = 2 \text{ [A]} \\ 10x_2 + 25x_3 &= 90 & x_2 &= \tfrac{1}{10}(90 - 25x_3) = i_2 = 4 \text{ [A]} \\ x_1 - x_2 + x_3 &= 0 & x_1 &= x_2 - x_3 = i_1 = 2 \text{ [A]} \end{aligned}$$

where A stands for "amperes." This is the answer to our problem. The solution is unique.

Elementary Row Operations. Row-Equivalent Systems

Example 2 illustrates the operations of the Gauss elimination. These are the first two of three operations, which are called

Elementary Row Operations for Matrices:

Interchange of two rows

Addition of a constant multiple of one row to another row

*Multiplication of a row by a **nonzero** constant c*

CAUTION! These operations are for rows, ***not for columns***! They correspond to the following

Elementary Operations for Equations:

Interchange of two equations

Addition of a constant multiple of one equation to another equation

*Multiplication of an equation by a **nonzero** constant c*

Clearly, the interchange of two equations does not alter the solution set. Neither does their addition because we can undo it by a corresponding subtraction. Similarly for their multiplication, which we can undo by multiplying the new equation by $1/c$ (since $c \neq 0$), producing the original equation.

We now call a linear system S_1 **row-equivalent** to a linear system S_2 if S_1 can be obtained from S_2 by (finitely many!) row operations. This justifies Gauss elimination and establishes the following result.

THEOREM 1

Row-Equivalent Systems

Row-equivalent linear systems have the same set of solutions.

Because of this theorem, systems having the same solution sets are often called *equivalent systems*. But note well that we are dealing with ***row operations***. No column operations on the augmented matrix are permitted in this context because they would generally alter the solution set.

A linear system (1) is called **overdetermined** if it has more equations than unknowns, as in Example 2, **determined** if $m = n$, as in Example 1, and **underdetermined** if it has fewer equations than unknowns.

Furthermore, a system (1) is called **consistent** if it has at least one solution (thus, one solution or infinitely many solutions), but **inconsistent** if it has no solutions at all, as $x_1 + x_2 = 1, x_1 + x_2 = 0$ in Example 1, Case (c).

Gauss Elimination: The Three Possible Cases of Systems

We have seen, in Example 2, that Gauss elimination can solve linear systems that have a unique solution. This leaves us to apply Gauss elimination to a system with infinitely many solutions (in Example 3) and one with no solution (in Example 4).

EXAMPLE 3 Gauss Elimination if Infinitely Many Solutions Exist

Solve the following linear system of three equations in four unknowns whose augmented matrix is

$$(5)\quad \left[\begin{array}{cccc|c} 3.0 & 2.0 & 2.0 & -5.0 & 8.0 \\ 0.6 & 1.5 & 1.5 & -5.4 & 2.7 \\ 1.2 & -0.3 & -0.3 & 2.4 & 2.1 \end{array}\right]. \qquad \text{Thus,} \qquad \begin{aligned} 3.0x_1 + 2.0x_2 + 2.0x_3 - 5.0x_4 &= 8.0 \\ \boxed{0.6x_1} + 1.5x_2 + 1.5x_3 - 5.4x_4 &= 2.7 \\ \boxed{1.2x_1} - 0.3x_2 - 0.3x_3 + 2.4x_4 &= 2.1. \end{aligned}$$

Solution. As in the previous example, we circle pivots and box terms of equations and corresponding entries to be eliminated. We indicate the operations in terms of equations and operate on both equations and matrices.

Step 1. Elimination of x_1 from the second and third equations by adding

$$-0.6/3.0 = -0.2 \text{ times the first equation to the second equation,}$$

$$-1.2/3.0 = -0.4 \text{ times the first equation to the third equation.}$$

This gives the following, in which the pivot of the next step is circled.

$$(6)\quad \left[\begin{array}{cccc|c} 3.0 & 2.0 & 2.0 & -5.0 & 8.0 \\ 0 & 1.1 & 1.1 & -4.4 & 1.1 \\ 0 & -1.1 & -1.1 & 4.4 & -1.1 \end{array}\right] \begin{array}{l} \\ \text{Row 2} - 0.2 \text{ Row 1} \\ \text{Row 3} - 0.4 \text{ Row 1} \end{array} \qquad \begin{aligned} 3.0x_1 + 2.0x_2 + 2.0x_3 - 5.0x_4 &= 8.0 \\ 1.1x_2 + 1.1x_3 - 4.4x_4 &= 1.1 \\ \boxed{-1.1x_2} - 1.1x_3 + 4.4x_4 &= -1.1. \end{aligned}$$

Step 2. Elimination of x_2 from the third equation of (6) by adding

$$1.1/1.1 = 1 \text{ times the second equation to the third equation.}$$

This gives

$$(7)\quad \left[\begin{array}{cccc|c} 3.0 & 2.0 & 2.0 & -5.0 & 8.0 \\ 0 & 1.1 & 1.1 & -4.4 & 1.1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array}\right] \begin{array}{l} \\ \\ \text{Row 3} + \text{Row 2} \end{array} \qquad \begin{aligned} 3.0x_1 + 2.0x_2 + 2.0x_3 - 5.0x_4 &= 8.0 \\ 1.1x_2 + 1.1x_3 - 4.4x_4 &= 1.1 \\ 0 &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

Back Substitution. From the second equation, $x_2 = 1 - x_3 + 4x_4$. From this and the first equation, $x_1 = 2 - x_4$. Since x_3 and x_4 remain arbitrary, we have infinitely many solutions. If we choose a value of x_3 and a value of x_4, then the corresponding values of x_1 and x_2 are uniquely determined.

On Notation. If unknowns remain arbitrary, it is also customary to denote them by other letters $t_1, t_2, \cdots$. In this example we may thus write $x_1 = 2 - x_4 = 2 - t_2$, $x_2 = 1 - x_3 + 4x_4 = 1 - t_1 + 4t_2$, $x_3 = t_1$ (first arbitrary unknown), $x_4 = t_2$ (second arbitrary unknown). ■

EXAMPLE 4 Gauss Elimination if no Solution Exists

What will happen if we apply the Gauss elimination to a linear system that has no solution? The answer is that in this case the method will show this fact by producing a contradiction. For instance, consider

$$\left[\begin{array}{ccc|c} 3 & 2 & 1 & 3 \\ 2 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ 6 & 2 & 4 & 6 \end{array}\right] \qquad \begin{aligned} 3x_1 + 2x_2 + x_3 &= 3 \\ \boxed{2x_1} + x_2 + x_3 &= 0 \\ \boxed{6x_1} + 2x_2 + 4x_3 &= 6. \end{aligned}$$

Step 1. Elimination of x_1 from the second and third equations by adding

$$-\tfrac{2}{3} \text{ times the first equation to the second equation,}$$

$$-\tfrac{6}{3} = -2 \text{ times the first equation to the third equation.}$$

This gives

$$\left[\begin{array}{ccc|c} 3 & 2 & 1 & 3 \\ 0 & -\frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & -2 \\ 0 & -2 & 2 & 0 \end{array}\right] \begin{array}{l} \\ \text{Row 2} - \frac{2}{3}\text{ Row 1} \\ \text{Row 3} - 2\text{ Row 1} \end{array} \qquad \begin{aligned} 3x_1 + 2x_2 + \phantom{\frac{1}{3}}x_3 &= 3 \\ -\tfrac{1}{3}x_2 + \tfrac{1}{3}x_3 &= -2 \\ \boxed{-2x_2} + 2x_3 &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

Step 2. Elimination of x_2 from the third equation gives

$$\left[\begin{array}{ccc|c} 3 & 2 & 1 & 3 \\ 0 & -\frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 12 \end{array}\right] \begin{array}{l} \\ \\ \text{Row 3} - 6\text{ Row 2} \end{array} \qquad \begin{aligned} 3x_1 + 2x_2 + x_3 &= 3 \\ -\tfrac{1}{3}x_2 + \tfrac{1}{3}x_3 &= -2 \\ 0 &= 12. \end{aligned}$$

The false statement $0 = 12$ shows that the system has no solution. ■

Row Echelon Form and Information From It

At the end of the Gauss elimination the form of the coefficient matrix, the augmented matrix, and the system itself are called the **row echelon form**. In it, rows of zeros, if present, are the last rows, and, in each nonzero row, the leftmost nonzero entry is farther to the right than in the previous row. For instance, in Example 4 the coefficient matrix and its augmented in row echelon form are

$$\text{(8)} \qquad \begin{bmatrix} 3 & 2 & 1 \\ 0 & -\frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{3} \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \left[\begin{array}{ccc|c} 3 & 2 & 1 & 3 \\ 0 & -\frac{1}{3} & \frac{1}{3} & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 12 \end{array}\right].$$

Note that we do not require that the leftmost nonzero entries be 1 since this would have no theoretic or numeric advantage. (The so-called *reduced echelon form*, in which those entries *are* 1, will be discussed in Sec. 7.8.)

The original system of m equations in n unknowns has augmented matrix $[\mathbf{A} \,|\, \mathbf{b}]$. This is to be row reduced to matrix $[\mathbf{R} \,|\, \mathbf{f}]$. The two systems $\mathbf{Ax} = \mathbf{b}$ and $\mathbf{Rx} = \mathbf{f}$ are equivalent: if either one has a solution, so does the other, and the solutions are identical.

At the end of the Gauss elimination (before the back substitution), the row echelon form of the augmented matrix will be

$$\text{(9)} \qquad \left[\begin{array}{ccccc|c} r_{11} & r_{12} & \cdots & & r_{1n} & f_1 \\ & r_{22} & \cdots & & r_{2n} & f_2 \\ & & \ddots & & \vdots & \vdots \\ & & & r_{rr} \ \cdots & r_{rn} & f_r \\ & & & & & f_{r+1} \\ & & & & & \vdots \\ & & & & & f_m \end{array}\right].$$

Here, $r \leqq m$, $r_{11} \neq 0$, and all entries in the blue triangle and blue rectangle are zero.

The number of nonzero rows, r, in the row-reduced coefficient matrix $\mathbf{R}$ is called the **rank of R** and also the **rank of A**. Here is the method for determining whether $\mathbf{Ax} = \mathbf{b}$ has solutions and what they are:

(a) No solution. If r is less than m (meaning that $\mathbf{R}$ actually has at least one row of all 0s) *and* at least one of the numbers $f_{r+1}, f_{r+2}, \cdots, f_m$ is not zero, then the system

$\mathbf{Rx} = \mathbf{f}$ is inconsistent: No solution is possible. Therefore the system $\mathbf{Ax} = \mathbf{b}$ is inconsistent as well. See Example 4, where $r = 2 < m = 3$ and $f_{r+1} = f_3 = 12$.

If the system is consistent (either $r = m$, or $r < m$ *and* all the numbers $f_{r+1}, f_{r+2}, \cdots, f_m$ are zero), then there are solutions.

(b) Unique solution. If the system is consistent and $r = n$, there is exactly one solution, which can be found by back substitution. See Example 2, where $r = n = 3$ and $m = 4$.

(c) Infinitely many solutions. To obtain any of these solutions, choose values of $x_{r+1}, \cdots, x_n$ arbitrarily. Then solve the rth equation for x_r (in terms of those arbitrary values), then the $(r - 1)$st equation for x_{r-1}, and so on up the line. See Example 3.

Orientation. Gauss elimination is reasonable in computing time and storage demand. We shall consider those aspects in Sec. 20.1 in the chapter on numeric linear algebra. Section 7.4 develops fundamental concepts of linear algebra such as linear independence and rank of a matrix. These in turn will be used in Sec. 7.5 to fully characterize the behavior of linear systems in terms of existence and uniqueness of solutions.

PROBLEM SET 7.3

1–14 GAUSS ELIMINATION

Solve the linear system given explicitly or by its augmented matrix. Show details.

1. $\begin{aligned} 4x - 6y &= -11 \\ -3x + 8y &= 10 \end{aligned}$

2. $\begin{bmatrix} 3.0 & -0.5 & 0.6 \\ 1.5 & 4.5 & 6.0 \end{bmatrix}$

3. $\begin{aligned} x + y - z &= 9 \\ 8y + 6z &= -6 \\ -2x + 4y - 6z &= 40 \end{aligned}$

4. $\begin{bmatrix} 4 & 1 & 0 & 4 \\ 5 & -3 & 1 & 2 \\ -9 & 2 & -1 & 5 \end{bmatrix}$

5. $\begin{bmatrix} 13 & 12 & -6 \\ -4 & 7 & -73 \\ 11 & -13 & 157 \end{bmatrix}$

6. $\begin{bmatrix} 4 & -8 & 3 & 16 \\ -1 & 2 & -5 & -21 \\ 3 & -6 & 1 & 7 \end{bmatrix}$

7. $\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 4 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 1 & -2 & 0 \\ 4 & 0 & 6 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

8. $\begin{aligned} 4y + 3z &= 8 \\ 2x - z &= 2 \\ 3x + 2y &= 5 \end{aligned}$

9. $\begin{aligned} -2y - 2z &= -8 \\ 3x + 4y - 5z &= 13 \end{aligned}$

10. $\begin{bmatrix} 5 & -7 & 3 & 17 \\ -15 & 21 & -9 & 50 \end{bmatrix}$

11. $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 5 & 5 & -10 & 0 \\ 2 & -3 & -3 & 6 & 2 \\ 4 & 1 & 1 & -2 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$

12. $\begin{bmatrix} 2 & -2 & 4 & 0 & 0 \\ -3 & 3 & -6 & 5 & 15 \\ 1 & -1 & 2 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

13. $\begin{aligned} 10x + 4y - 2z &= -4 \\ -3w - 17x + y + 2z &= 2 \\ w + x + y &= 6 \\ 8w - 34x + 16y - 10z &= 4 \end{aligned}$

14. $\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 3 & 1 & -11 & 1 \\ 5 & -2 & 5 & -4 & 5 \\ 1 & -1 & 3 & -3 & 3 \\ 3 & 4 & -7 & 2 & -7 \end{bmatrix}$

15. Equivalence relation. By definition, an *equivalence relation* on a set is a relation satisfying three conditions: (named as indicated)

(i) Each element A of the set is equivalent to itself (*Reflexivity*).

(ii) If A is equivalent to B, then B is equivalent to A (*Symmetry*).

(iii) If A is equivalent to B and B is equivalent to C, then A is equivalent to C (*Transitivity*).

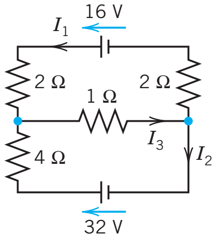
Show that row equivalence of matrices satisfies these three conditions. *Hint*. Show that for each of the three elementary row operations these conditions hold.

16. CAS PROJECT. Gauss Elimination and Back Substitution. Write a program for Gauss elimination and back substitution **(a)** that does not include pivoting and **(b)** that does include pivoting. Apply the programs to Probs. 11–14 and to some larger systems of your choice.

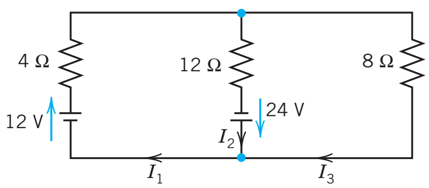
17–21 MODELS OF NETWORKS

In Probs. 17–19, using Kirchhoff's laws (see Example 2) and showing the details, find the currents:

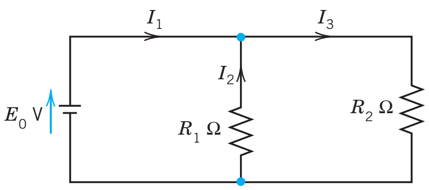
17.



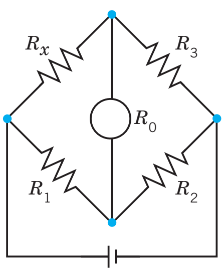
18.



19.

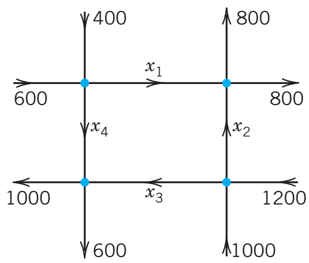


20. Wheatstone bridge. Show that if $R_x/R_3 = R_1/R_2$ in the figure, then $I = 0$. (R_0 is the resistance of the instrument by which I is measured.) This bridge is a method for determining R_x. R_1, R_2, R_3 are known. R_3 is variable. To get R_x, make $I = 0$ by varying R_3. Then calculate $R_x = R_3 R_1/R_2$.



Wheatstone bridge

Problem 20



Net of one-way streets

Problem 21

21. Traffic flow. Methods of electrical circuit analysis have applications to other fields. For instance, applying the analog of Kirchhoff's Current Law, find the traffic flow (cars per hour) in the net of one-way streets (in the directions indicated by the arrows) shown in the figure. Is the solution unique?

22. Models of markets. Determine the equilibrium solution ($D_1 = S_1, D_2 = S_2$) of the two-commodity market with linear model (D, S, P = demand, supply, price; index 1 = first commodity, index 2 = second commodity)

$$D_1 = 40 - 2P_1 - P_2, \qquad S_1 = 4P_1 - P_2 + 4,$$

$$D_2 = 5P_1 - 2P_2 + 16, \qquad S_2 = 3P_2 - 4.$$

23. Balancing a chemical equation $x_1C_3H_8 + x_2O_2 \rightarrow x_3CO_2 + x_4H_2O$ means finding integer x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4 such that the numbers of atoms of carbon (C), hydrogen (H), and oxygen (O) are the same on both sides of this reaction, in which propane C_3H_8 and O_2 give carbon dioxide and water. Find the smallest positive integers $x_1, \cdots, x_4$.

24. PROJECT. Elementary Matrices. The idea is that elementary operations can be accomplished by matrix multiplication. If **A** is an $m \times n$ matrix on which we want to do an elementary operation, then there is a matrix **E** such that **EA** is the new matrix after the operation. Such an **E** is called an **elementary matrix**. This idea can be helpful, for instance, in the design of algorithms. (*Computationally*, it is generally preferable to do row operations *directly*, rather than by multiplication by **E**.)

(a) Show that the following are elementary matrices, for interchanging Rows 2 and 3, for adding -5 times the first row to the third, and for multiplying the fourth row by 8.

$$\mathbf{E}_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\mathbf{E}_2 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -5 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix},$$

$$\mathbf{E}_3 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 8 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Apply $\mathbf{E}_1, \mathbf{E}_2, \mathbf{E}_3$ to a vector and to a 4×3 matrix of your choice. Find $\mathbf{B} = \mathbf{E}_3\mathbf{E}_2\mathbf{E}_1\mathbf{A}$, where $\mathbf{A} = [a_{jk}]$ is the general 4×2 matrix. Is $\mathbf{B}$ equal to $\mathbf{C} = \mathbf{E}_1\mathbf{E}_2\mathbf{E}_3\mathbf{A}$?

(b) Conclude that $\mathbf{E}_1, \mathbf{E}_2, \mathbf{E}_3$ are obtained by doing the corresponding elementary operations on the 4×4 unit matrix. Prove that *if* $\mathbf{M}$ *is obtained from* $\mathbf{A}$ *by an elementary row operation, then*

$$\mathbf{M} = \mathbf{E}\mathbf{A},$$

where $\mathbf{E}$ *is obtained from the* $n \times n$ *unit matrix* $\mathbf{I}_n$ *by the same row operation.*

7.4 Linear Independence. Rank of a Matrix. Vector Space

Since our next goal is to fully characterize the behavior of linear systems in terms of existence and uniqueness of solutions (Sec. 7.5), we have to introduce new fundamental linear algebraic concepts that will aid us in doing so. Foremost among these are ***linear independence*** and the ***rank of a matrix***. Keep in mind that these concepts are intimately linked with the important Gauss elimination method and how it works.

Linear Independence and Dependence of Vectors

Given any set of m vectors $\mathbf{a}_{(1)}, \cdots, \mathbf{a}_{(m)}$ (with the same number of components), a **linear combination** of these vectors is an expression of the form

$$c_1\mathbf{a}_{(1)} + c_2\mathbf{a}_{(2)} + \cdots + c_m\mathbf{a}_{(m)}$$

where $c_1, c_2, \cdots, c_m$ are any scalars. Now consider the equation

$$c_1\mathbf{a}_{(1)} + c_2\mathbf{a}_{(2)} + \cdots + c_m\mathbf{a}_{(m)} = \mathbf{0}. \tag{1}$$

Clearly, this vector equation (1) holds if we choose all c_j's zero, because then it becomes $\mathbf{0} = \mathbf{0}$. If this is the only m-tuple of scalars for which (1) holds, then our vectors $\mathbf{a}_{(1)}, \cdots, \mathbf{a}_{(m)}$ are said to form a *linearly independent set* or, more briefly, we call them **linearly independent**. Otherwise, if (1) also holds with scalars not all zero, we call these vectors **linearly dependent**. This means that we can express at least one of the vectors as a linear combination of the other vectors. For instance, if (1) holds with, say, $c_1 \neq 0$, we can solve (1) for $\mathbf{a}_{(1)}$:

$$\mathbf{a}_{(1)} = k_2\mathbf{a}_{(2)} + \cdots + k_m\mathbf{a}_{(m)} \qquad \text{where } k_j = -c_j/c_1.$$

(Some k_j's may be zero. Or even all of them, namely, if $\mathbf{a}_{(1)} = \mathbf{0}$.)

Why is linear independence important? Well, if a set of vectors is linearly dependent, then we can get rid of at least one or perhaps more of the vectors until we get a linearly independent set. This set is then the smallest "truly essential" set with which we can work. Thus, we cannot express any of the vectors, of this set, linearly in terms of the others.

EXAMPLE 1 **Linear Independence and Dependence**

The three vectors

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{a}_{(1)} &= [\ 3 \quad 0 \quad 2 \quad 2] \\ \mathbf{a}_{(2)} &= [-6 \quad 42 \quad 24 \quad 54] \\ \mathbf{a}_{(3)} &= [\ 21 \quad -21 \quad 0 \quad -15] \end{aligned}$$

are linearly dependent because

$$6\mathbf{a}_{(1)} - \tfrac{1}{2}\mathbf{a}_{(2)} - \mathbf{a}_{(3)} = \mathbf{0}.$$

Although this is easily checked by vector arithmetic (do it!), it is not so easy to discover. However, a systematic method for finding out about linear independence and dependence follows below.

The first two of the three vectors are linearly independent because $c_1\mathbf{a}_{(1)} + c_2\mathbf{a}_{(2)} = \mathbf{0}$ implies $c_2 = 0$ (from the second components) and then $c_1 = 0$ (from any other component of $\mathbf{a}_{(1)}$. ■

Rank of a Matrix

DEFINITION

The **rank** of a matrix $\mathbf{A}$ is the maximum number of linearly independent row vectors of $\mathbf{A}$. It is denoted by rank $\mathbf{A}$.

Our further discussion will show that the rank of a matrix is an important key concept for understanding general properties of matrices and linear systems of equations.

EXAMPLE 2 **Rank**

The matrix

$$\mathbf{A} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 & 0 & 2 & 2 \\ -6 & 42 & 24 & 54 \\ 21 & -21 & 0 & -15 \end{bmatrix} \tag{2}$$

has rank 2, because Example 1 shows that the first two row vectors are linearly independent, whereas all three row vectors are linearly dependent.

Note further that rank $\mathbf{A} = 0$ if and only if $\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{0}$. This follows directly from the definition. ■

We call a matrix $\mathbf{A}_1$ **row-equivalent** to a matrix $\mathbf{A}_2$ if $\mathbf{A}_1$ can be obtained from $\mathbf{A}_2$ by (finitely many!) elementary row operations.

Now the maximum number of linearly independent row vectors of a matrix does not change if we change the order of rows or multiply a row by a nonzero c or take a linear combination by adding a multiple of a row to another row. This shows that rank is **invariant** under elementary row operations:

THEOREM 1

Row-Equivalent Matrices

Row-equivalent matrices have the same rank.

Hence we can determine the rank of a matrix by reducing the matrix to row-echelon form, as was done in Sec. 7.3. Once the matrix is in row-echelon form, we count the number of nonzero rows, which is precisely the rank of the matrix.

EXAMPLE 3 **Determination of Rank**

For the matrix in Example 2 we obtain successively

$$\mathbf{A} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 & 0 & 2 & 2 \\ -6 & 42 & 24 & 54 \\ 21 & -21 & 0 & -15 \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{(given)}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 0 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 42 & 28 & 58 \\ 0 & -21 & -14 & -29 \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \\ \text{Row 2} + 2\text{ Row 1} \\ \text{Row 3} - 7\text{ Row 1} \end{matrix}$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 0 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 42 & 28 & 58 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{matrix} \\ \\ \text{Row 3} + \tfrac{1}{2}\text{ Row 2.} \end{matrix}$$

The last matrix is in row-echelon form and has two nonzero rows. Hence rank $\mathbf{A} = 2$, as before. ■

Examples 1–3 illustrate the following useful theorem (with $p = 3$, $n = 3$, and the rank of the matrix $= 2$).

THEOREM 2 **Linear Independence and Dependence of Vectors**

Consider p vectors that each have n components. Then these vectors are linearly independent if the matrix formed, with these vectors as row vectors, has rank p. However, these vectors are linearly dependent if that matrix has rank less than p.

Further important properties will result from the basic

THEOREM 3 **Rank in Terms of Column Vectors**

The rank r of a matrix **A** *equals the maximum number of linearly independent* ***column*** *vectors of* **A**.

Hence **A** *and its transpose* $\mathbf{A}^\mathsf{T}$ *have the same rank.*

PROOF In this proof we write simply "rows" and "columns" for row and column vectors. Let $\mathbf{A}$ be an $m \times n$ matrix of rank $\mathbf{A} = r$. Then by definition of rank, $\mathbf{A}$ has r linearly independent rows which we denote by $\mathbf{v}_{(1)}, \cdots, \mathbf{v}_{(r)}$ (regardless of their position in $\mathbf{A}$), and all the rows $\mathbf{a}_{(1)}, \cdots, \mathbf{a}_{(m)}$ of $\mathbf{A}$ are linear combinations of those, say,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{a}_{(1)} &= c_{11}\mathbf{v}_{(1)} + c_{12}\mathbf{v}_{(2)} + \cdots + c_{1r}\mathbf{v}_{(r)} \\ \mathbf{a}_{(2)} &= c_{21}\mathbf{v}_{(1)} + c_{22}\mathbf{v}_{(2)} + \cdots + c_{2r}\mathbf{v}_{(r)} \\ &\;\;\vdots \\ \mathbf{a}_{(m)} &= c_{m1}\mathbf{v}_{(1)} + c_{m2}\mathbf{v}_{(2)} + \cdots + c_{mr}\mathbf{v}_{(r)}. \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

These are vector equations for rows. To switch to columns, we write (3) in terms of components as n such systems, with $k = 1, \cdots, n$,

$$
\begin{aligned}
a_{1k} &= c_{11}v_{1k} + c_{12}v_{2k} + \cdots + c_{1r}v_{rk} \\
a_{2k} &= c_{21}v_{1k} + c_{22}v_{2k} + \cdots + c_{2r}v_{rk} \\
&\vdots \\
a_{mk} &= c_{m1}v_{1k} + c_{m2}v_{2k} + \cdots + c_{mr}v_{rk}
\end{aligned}
\tag{4}
$$

and collect components in columns. Indeed, we can write (4) as

$$
\begin{bmatrix} a_{1k} \\ a_{2k} \\ \vdots \\ a_{mk} \end{bmatrix} = v_{1k} \begin{bmatrix} c_{11} \\ c_{21} \\ \vdots \\ c_{m1} \end{bmatrix} + v_{2k} \begin{bmatrix} c_{12} \\ c_{22} \\ \vdots \\ c_{m2} \end{bmatrix} + \cdots + v_{rk} \begin{bmatrix} c_{1r} \\ c_{2r} \\ \vdots \\ c_{mr} \end{bmatrix}
\tag{5}
$$

where $k = 1, \cdots, n$. Now the vector on the left is the kth column vector of $\mathbf{A}$. We see that each of these n columns is a linear combination of the same r columns on the right. Hence $\mathbf{A}$ cannot have more linearly independent columns than rows, whose number is rank $\mathbf{A} = r$. Now rows of $\mathbf{A}$ are columns of the transpose $\mathbf{A}^\mathsf{T}$. For $\mathbf{A}^\mathsf{T}$ our conclusion is that $\mathbf{A}^\mathsf{T}$ cannot have more linearly independent columns than rows, so that $\mathbf{A}$ cannot have more linearly independent rows than columns. Together, the number of linearly independent columns of $\mathbf{A}$ must be r, the rank of $\mathbf{A}$. This completes the proof. ■

EXAMPLE 4 Illustration of Theorem 3

The matrix in (2) has rank 2. From Example 3 we see that the first two row vectors are linearly independent and by "working backward" we can verify that Row 3 $=$ 6 Row 1 $-\frac{1}{2}$ Row 2. Similarly, the first two columns are linearly independent, and by reducing the last matrix in Example 3 by columns we find that

$$\text{Column } 3 = \tfrac{2}{3}\,\text{Column } 1 + \tfrac{2}{3}\,\text{Column } 2 \qquad \text{and} \qquad \text{Column } 4 = \tfrac{2}{3}\,\text{Column } 1 + \tfrac{29}{21}\,\text{Column } 2.$$ ■

Combining Theorems 2 and 3 we obtain

THEOREM 4 Linear Dependence of Vectors

Consider p vectors each having n components. If $n < p$, then these vectors *are linearly dependent.*

PROOF The matrix $\mathbf{A}$ with those p vectors as row vectors has p rows and $n < p$ columns; hence by Theorem 3 it has rank $\mathbf{A} \leqq n < p$, which implies linear dependence by Theorem 2. ■

Vector Space

The following related concepts are of general interest in linear algebra. In the present context they provide a clarification of essential properties of matrices and their role in connection with linear systems.