

Definition 5.1 An algorithm that reduces A to $\text{RREF}(A)$ is called **Gauss-Jordan elimination**. For example:

1. Circle the cell that (a) is in the top-most row without a pivot position and (b) is in the left-most column with a nonzero term either in that position or below it. This position (not the number inside) is called a **pivot**.
2. Change the pivot's value to 1 by using row operations involving only the pivot row and rows below it.
3. Add or subtract multiples of the pivot row to zero out above and below the pivot.
4. Return to Step 1 and repeat as needed until the matrix is in row reduced echelon form.

Definition 5.3 The columns of $\text{RREF}(A)$ without a leading term represent **free variables** of the linear system modeled by A that may be set equal to arbitrary parameters. The other **bounded variables** can then be expressed in terms of those parameters to describe the solution set to the linear system modeled by A .

Definition 5.9 A **homogeneous system** is a linear system satisfying $b_i = 0$, that is, it is a linear system of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 + \dots + a_{1n}x_n & = & 0 \\ a_{21}x_1 + a_{22}x_2 + \dots + a_{2n}x_n & = & 0 \\ \vdots & & \vdots & & \vdots & & \vdots \\ a_{m1}x_1 + a_{m2}x_2 + \dots + a_{mn}x_n & = & 0 \end{array}$$

Definition 5.11 A minimal set of Euclidean vectors generating the solution set to a homogeneous system is called a **basis** for the solution set of the homogeneous system. For example:

$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \\ x_4 \end{bmatrix} = a \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + b \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \text{Basis} = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ -1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \right\}$$