Linear Equations in Linear Algebra

A matrix is in **echelon form** if:

1. All nonzero rows are above any rows of all zeros
2. Each leading entry of a row is in a column to the right of the leading entry of the row above it
3. All entries in a column below a leading entry are zeros

A matrix is in **reduced echelon form** if:

1. It is in echelon form
2. The leading entry in each nonzero row is 1

Properties

- Two matrices are row equivalent if there exists a sequence of elementary row operations that transforms one matrix into the other
- Each matrix is row equivalent to only one reduced echelon matrix
- The echelon form of a matrix is not unique, but the reduced echelon form is unique

Existence and Uniqueness Theorem

A linear system is consistent if the rightmost column of echelon form of the augmented matrix is not a pivot column.

Row Reduction Algorithm

The row reduction algorithm leads directly to an explicit description of the solution set of a linear system when the algorithm is applied to the augmented matrix of the system, leading to a general solution of a system.

1. Forward Phase (reducing a matrix to echelon form)
   (a) Begin with the leftmost nonzero column. This is a pivot column. The pivot position is at the top
   (b) Select a nonzero entry in the pivot column as a pivot. If necessary, interchange rows to move this entry into the pivot position
   (c) Use row replacement operations to create zeros in all positions below the pivot
   (d) Ignore the row containing the pivot position and all rows above it
   (e) Repeat until there are no more nonzero rows to modify

2. Backward Phase (reducing a matrix to reduced echelon form)

   (a) Beginning with the rightmost pivot and working upward and to the left, create zeros above each pivot. If a pivot is not 1, make it 1 by a scaling operation

Span

The span of two vectors, Span$\{\mathbf{v}_1, \mathbf{v}_2\}$, represents all vectors that can be reached by scaling and adding the two vectors.