

# Pauli Matrix

We define

$$\sigma^0 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma^1 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma^3 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (1)$$

We define  $\sigma^0 = I_{2 \times 2}(\mathbb{C})$  just for convenience, it is used for balancing the index, you should not replace  $I$  any where. In the following part, we will use  $i, j, k$  to represent 1, 2, 3 and other Latin letters to represent 0, 1, 2, 3. Also, we will use Greek letters to represent 1, 2, which are the components of matrices. So there are something crazy:

$$\delta^\mu_\mu = 2, \delta^i_i = 3, \delta^a_a = 4. \quad (2)$$

**Property 1.**

$$\sigma^i \sigma^j = \delta^{ij} I + i \varepsilon^{ijk} \sigma_k. \quad (3)$$

If we define a general<sup>1</sup>  $\epsilon^{abc}$ :

$$\epsilon_{abc} = \begin{cases} \varepsilon^{abc} & , 0 \notin \{a, b, c\} \\ 0 & , 0 \in \{a, b, c\} \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

Replace  $\varepsilon^{ijk}$  with  $\epsilon^{abc}$ , the equality is still valid:

$$\boxed{\sigma^a \sigma^b = \delta^{ab} \sigma^0 + i \epsilon^{abc} \sigma_c.} \quad (5)$$

**Property 2.** For any  $i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ ,

$$\boxed{\det(\sigma^i) = -1, \text{tr}(\sigma^i) = 0, (\sigma^i)^\dagger = \sigma^i.} \quad (6)$$

**Property 3** (Completeness).

Any  $M \in M_{2 \times 2}(\mathbb{C})$  can be written as a linear combination of  $\sigma^0, \sigma^1, \sigma^2, \sigma^3$ . Since,

$$\sigma^0 + \sigma^3 = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma^0 - \sigma^3 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma^1 + i\sigma^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \sigma^1 - i\sigma^2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 2 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (7)$$

Let  $M = \beta_a \sigma^a$ , then

$$M \sigma^b = \beta_a \sigma^a \sigma^b = \beta_a (\delta^{ab} I + i \epsilon^{abc} \sigma_c). \quad (8)$$

We take its trace, the second term at right hand side is zero, so

$$\boxed{\beta^b = \frac{1}{2} \text{tr}(M \sigma^b).} \quad (9)$$

---

<sup>1</sup>It is also anti-symmetric:  $\forall a, b, c \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\}, (a-b)(b-c)(c-a) = 0 \Rightarrow \epsilon^{abc} = 0$ .

That means

$$M_{\rho}^{\lambda} \delta_{\lambda}^{\mu} \delta_{\nu}^{\rho} = M_{\nu}^{\mu} = \frac{1}{2} M_{\rho}^{\lambda} (\sigma_a)^{\rho}_{\lambda} (\sigma^a)^{\mu}_{\nu}. \quad (10)$$

Since  $M_{\rho}^{\lambda}$  is arbitrary, we can deduce that

$$\boxed{(\sigma_a)^{\rho}_{\lambda} (\sigma^a)^{\mu}_{\nu} = 2 \delta_{\lambda}^{\mu} \delta_{\nu}^{\rho}.} \quad (11)$$

In particular,

$$(\sigma_i)^{\rho}_{\lambda} (\sigma^i)^{\mu}_{\nu} = 2 \delta_{\lambda}^{\mu} \delta_{\nu}^{\rho} - \delta_{\lambda}^{\rho} \delta_{\nu}^{\mu}. \quad (12)$$

**Property 4** (Relation with cross product of vectors).

Let  $u^i, v^i$  be two vectors, then

$$\boxed{(u_i \sigma^i) (v_j \sigma^j) = i (u^i v^j \varepsilon_{ijk}) \sigma^k + u_k v^k I.} \quad (13)$$

In particular,

$$(u_i \sigma^i)^2 = (u^i u_i)^2 I. \quad (14)$$

**Property 5** (Exponential form).

Let  $\mathbf{n}$  be a unitary vector, then we can deduce that

$$\boxed{\exp \left[ i (n_i \sigma^i) \frac{\theta}{2} \right] = I \cos \frac{\theta}{2} + i (n_i \sigma^i) \sin \frac{\theta}{2}.} \quad (15)$$