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# Intro

Classical physics accurately predicts the movement of objects in our everyday world. However, there are effects that it does not account for, and as objects approach the speed of light, these effects that are negligible at low speeds become increasingly significant. This leads to two observers moving at high speeds relative to each other becoming unable to agree on the lengths of objects and the times in which events occur. Crucially though, one thing remains constant: the speed of light relative to each observer is the same, regardless of their movement. We must redefine our understanding of time and space to find out how this can be. This is where special relativity comes into play.

Special relativity is vital in particle, nuclear, and astrophysics, used for calculating nuclear reaction output power and measuring galaxy speeds. It is also needed for precision timekeeping on fast-moving GPS satellites to calculate positions accurately.

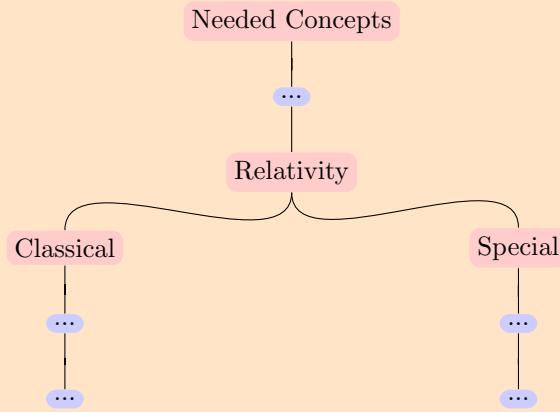
Despite its importance, special relativity continues to confuse even those well-versed in physics and mathematics. It can be as confusing to visualize and understand as quantum mechanics is. The theory requires letting go of some deeply held intuitions about the absolute nature of space and time that differ from our usual everyday experience of the physical world.

This handbook is meant to offer an intuitive, visual, and comprehensive overview. The aim is to maintain simplicity and avoid unnecessary abstraction in explanations. For example, time in diagrams is shown either using animations or multiple diagrams given one after another in a timeline. This approach avoids

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the use of unnecessary space-time diagrams, which represent time on one of the axes and make special relativity more abstract and confusing to visualize.

The first chapter is readable even for those without a math or physics background. It provides a non-mathematical, visual overview of the concepts. This chapter builds an intuitive understanding of the core ideas step-by-step, providing a solid foundation for developing the essential mathematical framework in later sections. The mathematical portion will begin with deriving how space and time coordinates function in special relativity. This will be followed by velocity addition, the Doppler effect, and the energy-momentum relationship. In addition to these topics, we will also explore some interesting subjects not typically covered in standard resources. These include how a source's emitted light is concentrated in the direction of its movement, aberration, and how a delay in light signals leads to retarded source positions and fields. These topics will probably not mean much to you yet, but they will give interesting insights.



Now, let us begin!

# Chapter 1

## Conceptual Overview

To grasp special relativity, we will first look at the classical understanding of the world. Then, we will see how we must change these classical laws of physics to account for light's constant speed relative to all observers. Which in turn will lead to many interesting consequences. The chapter begins with an overview of the core concepts to help us understand why we need special relativity and what it means, leaving the mathematical details and deeper insights for the following chapters.

This chapter's concepts will establish the mathematical framework for later chapters, using physical objects, such as moving trucks on roads, to represent the different perspectives of various observers. Whereas, in the mathematical chapters, we will use coordinate axes to represent the different perspectives (frames of reference).

Later, you will see the parallels between this conceptual overview and the mathematical chapters. This chapter will provide an overview of all the required concepts for special relativity, building up the needed knowledge bit by bit, starting with our classical understanding of how perspectives (frames of reference) work and showing how our understanding must change if we are to allow all observers to view light as moving at the same constant speed.

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## 1.1 Classical Addition of Velocities

Imagine a truck, carrying a cannon, is moving at 20 meters per second, and the cannon fires a ball at 100 meters per second relative to the truck. Classically, we add the truck and the ball's speed, to find the ball moves at 120 meters per second relative to the road. So, in classical physics, velocities are directly added. The ball relative to the road would move at the speed of the ball relative to the truck plus the truck's speed relative to the road, as shown in Figure (1.1).

However, this classical understanding is just a very good approximation for objects in our everyday life that we are used to seeing, which are moving much slower than the speed of light (roughly 300 000 000 meters per second), but we will get to this later. For now, in the following sections, we will explain what an inertial reference frame is and how this works in the classical context so that you can see more clearly the differences between classical and special relativity.

**Addition of Cannonball and Truck's Velocities**

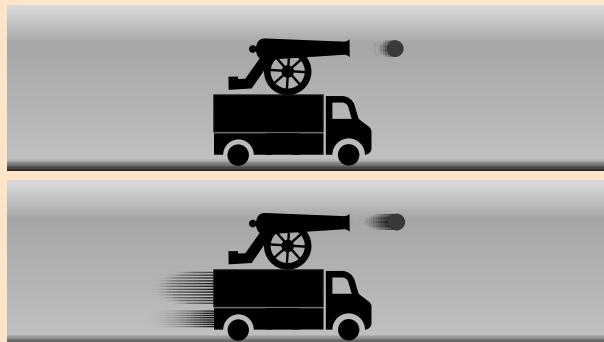


Figure 1.1: A diagram, showing the speed of a cannonball from two different perspectives, (top) is from the truck's perspective with the cannon at rest and the road moving backwards, the cannonball is shot and moves forward. The Figure (bottom) is from the road's perspective, with the truck moving relative to it. When the cannonball is shot, it looks like it is moving forward faster, with the previous cannonball's speed combined with the speed of the cannon that it was shot from. \*\*\* add labels of ball, truck and road speed

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## 1.2 Inertial Reference Frame

In the previous truck example, we could associate a grid of coordinates that is stationary relative to the truck and, hence, moving along with it. This perspective, fixed to the truck, is its frame of reference. A second grid of coordinates, stationary relative to the road, can also be introduced, representing the road's reference frame. These grids of coordinates are shown from the road's reference frame in Figure (1.2).

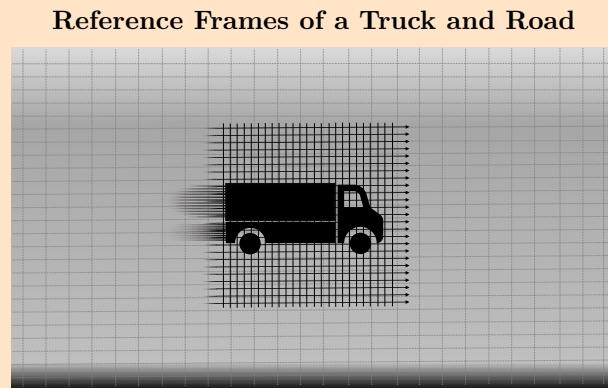


Figure 1.2: A diagram, showing the reference frame of a truck as a grid of coordinates that is moving with the truck relative to the road's reference frame shown as a stationary dashed gray grid of coordinates.

An inertial frame of reference is a reference frame that is not being accelerated. You can tell if you are being accelerated as you will feel a force. For example, in an accelerating car, you will feel the seat being accelerated into you, with your body slightly lagging behind in the acceleration. This principle is used in accelerometers to measure acceleration, as shown in Figure (1.3).

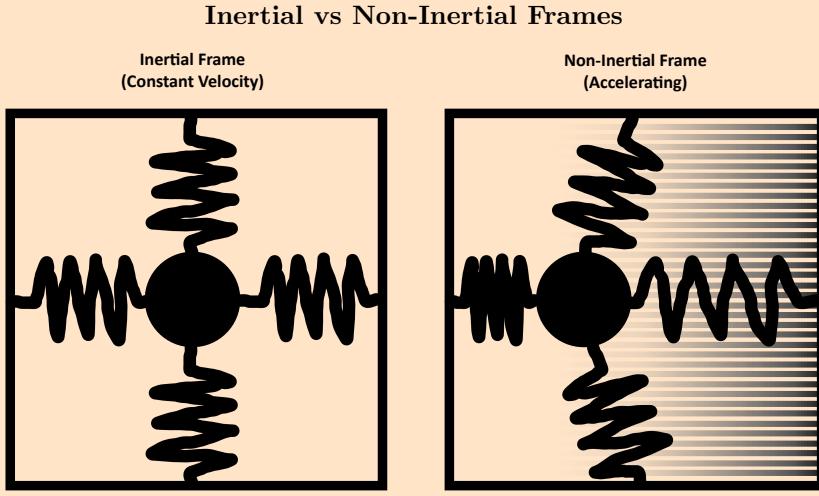


Figure 1.3: A diagram, showing a ball attached to the walls of a box by springs, with the ball centered in the box in the inertial frame, with no acceleration (left), and in a non-inertial frame (right) where the box is now accelerating to the right, The ball lags behind as the box accelerates.

Special relativity is just about how we change between inertial frames of reference and how it impacts the positions and the times they are at those positions. We will now look at how movement changes in classical relativity when we change between these inertial frames.

### 1.3 Classical Inertial Reference Frames

To see how to swap between reference frames in special relativity, we will first have to introduce the classical approach.

To illustrate this, we will look at a setup of two rats on a treadmill with a platform as shown in Figure (1.4), with three rocks hanging above the platform, which are at rest relative to the room. The two frames of reference will be the treadmill's platform and the room in which the treadmill is in. Both rats start under the same rock. One rat runs to a rock positioned in the forward direction of the treadmill. The other rat runs to an equally distanced rock to the side. After this, they return to the starting rock.

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Here, the platform can be seen as the medium in which the rats move. Both rats travel at the same constant speed relative to the platform, with the platform either at rest or at a lower speed than the rats to allow them to get to the rocks.

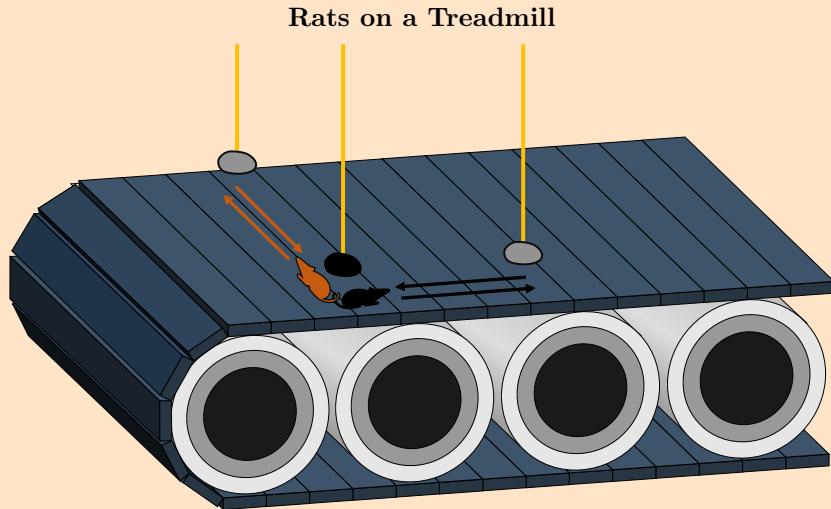
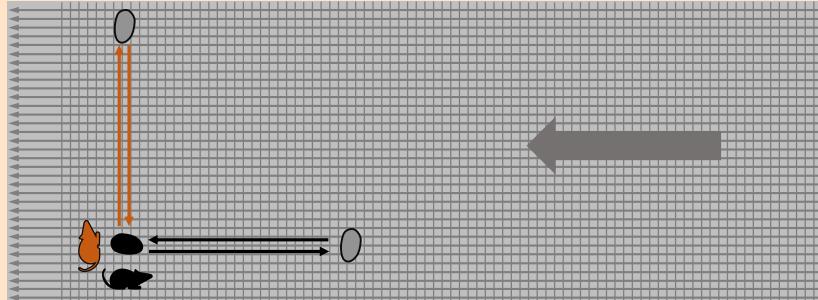


Figure 1.4: A diagram, showing a 3d view of a treadmill platform, with two rats and three hanging rocks, with arrows representing the rats moving from a starting rock to the other two equally distanced rocks, with the paths perpendicular to each other.

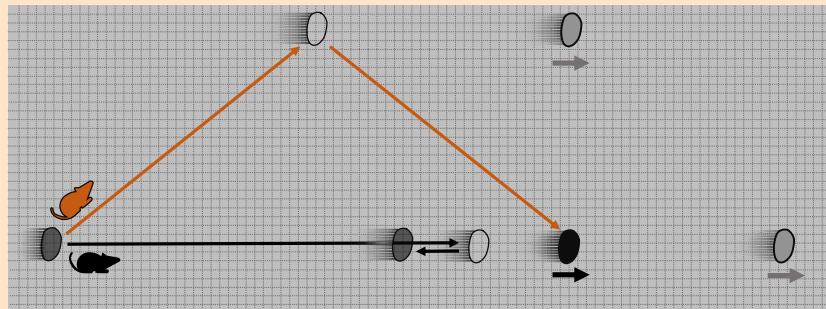
If the platform is at rest, they will return to the starting rock simultaneously. But if the treadmill is turned on and the platform is moving, the rats will also have to work against the movement of the platform to get to the rocks. This will lead to different distances the rats have to travel relative to the platform, and as a result, the rats get back to the starting rock at different times. Figure (1.5) shows what the direction of movement of the rats and rocks look like in each of the reference frames when the platform is moving.

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### Different Reference Frames of Rats on Treadmill



(a) Room's reference frame.



(b) Platform's reference frame.

Figure 1.5: Rats running on a moving platform of a treadmill from two different reference frames, with the paths of the rats represented as arrows.

From the room's perspective, the platform is moving backwards. The rat that is moving straight ahead will have impedance to its movement from the backwards pull of the platform. But after it turns around, it will have a boost from the platform to return to the starting rock. Meanwhile, the sideways-moving rat will have to move sideways and balance out the platform's backwards pull to keep its movement in the direction of the hanging rocks. This gives different lengths of paths depending on the reference frame, as shown in Figure (1.5). The rats in the platform's reference frame, move with the same speed for all the paths, represented by the arrows. Whereas, in the room's reference frame, we have a slower constant speed of the sideways-moving rat and two different speeds for the forward and backward paths of the other rat. This leads to different times for the rats to return to the starting rock.

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The rats here use the medium of the treadmill's platform to move, and similarly, it was thought that light needed a medium, called the aether, to travel through space. If there was this medium, we could test how fast it moved relative to Earth by finding the difference between the return times of light emitted in two perpendicular directions, just as in the treadmill example. So, next, we will look at the notion of a universal medium referred to as the aether and whether we can have the same frame swapping when it comes to light traveling in two different frames of reference, as we did in this section.

## 1.4 The Aether

In the 1800s, the theory was that light was a wave and, therefore, would need a medium that filled the vacuum of space for it to travel through, called "the luminiferous aether", and that light would travel at a constant speed relative to this aether, like how the rats in the previous section moved at a constant speed relative to the medium of the treadmill's platform. If the aether existed, the Earth would be moving through it, illustrated in Figure (1.6).

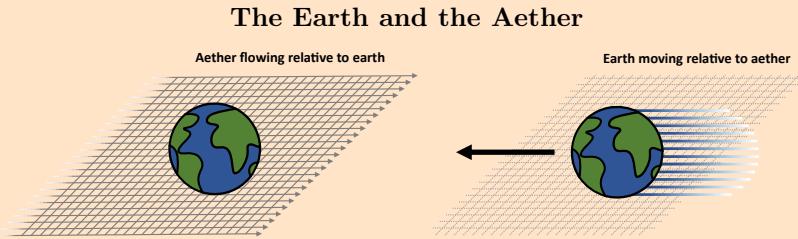


Figure 1.6: A diagram showing the proposed aether's and Earth's movement relative to each other.

So, an experimental setup by Michelson and Morley, shown in Figure (1.7), called an interferometer, was devised to measure Earth's movement through the aether [1], by measuring how it affected the return times of light that were emitted in different directions, as observed in Earth's reference frame. It did this by splitting a single light beam into two perpendicular paths that are then reflected back to be recombined and sent toward a light detector. By rotating

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the setup, the two light paths could be aligned, one parallel and the other perpendicular to the Earth's motion through the presumed aether. They reasoned that if the speed of light was constant with respect to the proposed aether, just like in the rat experiment from the previous section, the split light beams would recombine at different times.

From the previous section's system of rats on a treadmill, we can see that the treadmill's platform is analogous to the aether, and the rats are analogous to the light. Both have the room where these experiments are done as the other inertial reference frame.

### Experiment to Detect the Aether

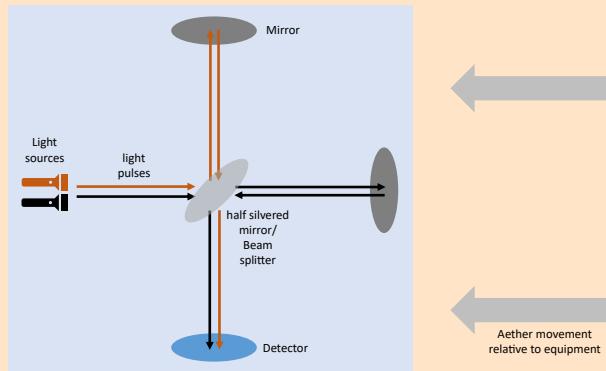


Figure 1.7: A diagram showing the Michelson-Morley experiment, we can take the part of the paths between the beam splitter and two mirrors to be analogous to the case of the paths in the previous section of the rat and treadmill system.

However, when Michelson and Morley performed the experiment, they found no difference in travel time to the detector for both paths, indicating that there was no difference in the speed of light in any direction in Earth's reference frame. Hence, light's speed is not dependent on the supposed aether. This null result seriously discredited the aether theories. It ultimately led to the proposal by Einstein in 1905 that the speed of light (in a vacuum) is a universal constant and is independent of the motion of the observer or source.

To allow for us to have this universal speed of light (in a vacuum), it will require us to change our ideas of how time and positions are perceived by different

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observers.

## 1.5 Speed of Light

The experiments showed light does not have a medium that it travels at a constant velocity relative to and, therefore, must instead travel at a constant velocity in a vacuum in all reference frames. This is independent of how fast the source and receiver of that light are moving in the frame, as shown with a moving truck's headlights in Figure (1.8). Light moves slower in objects such as glass, but this is due to the interactions between it and the material, impeding the movement of light.

Light itself moves extremely fast compared to any other everyday speeds we are used to (roughly 300 000 000 meters per second; it can travel the world's diameter in the blink of an eye). This is why we do not notice any delay in things we see in everyday life, though we should remember that there is this delay. For example, the light we currently see from the sun was emitted eight minutes ago for it to reach us now, and the further an object is located from us, the further back in time we are currently seeing it because of this delay.

When we look at the same truck setup as in Figure (1.1), but now have it in a vacuum, where the cannon firing a cannonball is swapped for headlights emitting light, we will find the same speed of light when measured relative to the truck or the road, but how can this be true?

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### Emitted Light in Different Frames

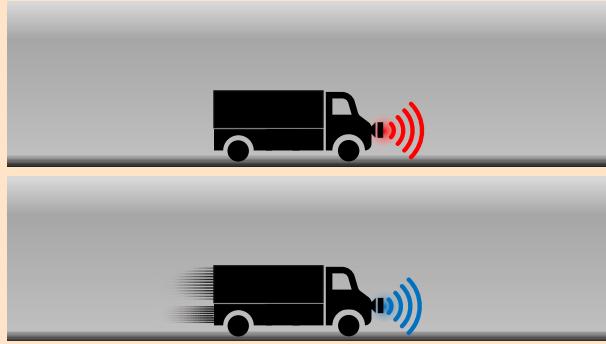


Figure 1.8: A diagram, showing light emitted from a truck in two different reference frames, with the emitted light having the same speed in each frame, though with different frequencies and energies due to the Doppler effect, which will be explained later.

For this to be true, we need a new way of thinking about velocity addition. This is because the velocities of objects must be added in a way that is consistent with the requirement that the speed of light is constant but also gives the approximate classical addition at speeds of objects at much less than the speed of light, like how we observed in the situation with the cannon and truck, shown in Figure (1.1). Since the speed of the light depends only on the units of time and positions, the only way to correct for this is to have the measured positions and times of objects transform differently when swapping between reference frames than the classical way. This is what we will talk about next. For the curious, it was the experiment by Ole Rømer that showed that light traveled at a finite speed rather than being instantaneously emitted and received.

## 1.6 Position and Time

### 1.6.1 Time Dilation

Consider a simple clock, as shown in Figure (1.10), made of a light pulse moving back and forth between two mirrors on a moving truck's floor and roof. Each tick of the clock is defined as the time it takes for the light to travel from one

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mirror to the other and back. For an observer in the truck, they will see the light go straight up and down between the mirrors, but an observer stationary relative to the road will see not just the light traveling up and down but also with the direction of the truck. Hence, it will travel a longer distance between ticks.

Given that the distance traveled by the light in the moving frame is longer, yet the speed of light is the same for both reference frames, as shown in previous sections, we are only left with two possibilities to keep the speed of light invariant: either the height of the truck is shorter, to give the same path length for light so that the ticks happen at the same rate, or that time itself moves slower in moving objects, the first option leads to paradoxes as shown in Figure (1.9).

#### Paradox of Height and Width Contraction

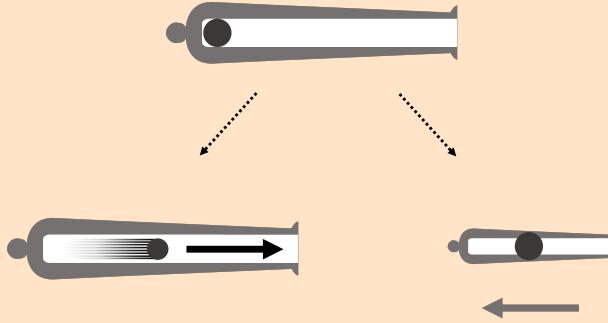


Figure 1.9: A diagram showing why there must not be a contraction in the perpendicular direction to the frame's relative motion. The top Figure shows a ball and cannon at rest. The bottom figures show the cannon ball being fired in the frame of the cannon (left), where the moving ball has a contracted width, and (right) in the frame of the ball, where the cannon is now moving and has a contracted width, with the ball at rest being the same size. Both frames would contradict each other if there was a change in the width of moving objects, as the walls of the cannon and the surface of the ball would overlap in one frame and have a gap between them in the other. So, we require no size change perpendicular to the object's movement.

From this paradox, we are only left with the possibility that the perceived travel time of the light must be longer in the road's reference frame, Meaning the light clock ticks slower to the observer on the road watching it as it moves.

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How much slower the time is passing in the moving truck relative to the road observer can be solved using the ratio of the lengths of the paths in each frame as shown in Figure (1.10), as this is the same ratio as the time between the ticks.

**Light Clock on a truck**

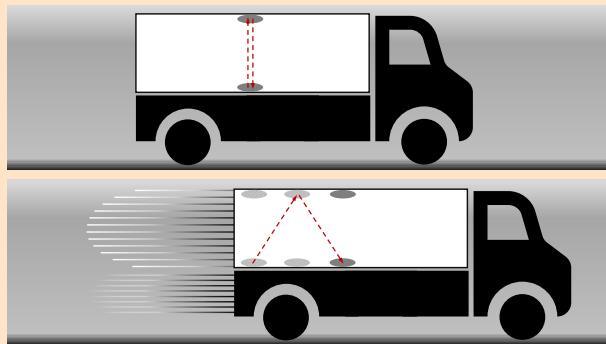


Figure 1.10: A diagram, showing the extra distance light travels in the road's frame with the truck moving, leading to the truck's time being perceived to move slower to an observer in the road's frame of reference.

Importantly, this time dilation phenomenon isn't limited to light clocks; it applies universally to all types of clocks. If you were to play a movie on the truck, it would take a longer time for it to play through from start to finish for an observer watching it from the road's reference frame. The actual time itself is being slowed down.

The closer the truck goes to the speed of light, the more significant the difference in how fast the road frame's time flows relative to the truck frame's time. This can be seen as a longer horizontal stretch in the path taken for the light from the perspective of someone standing still on the road, with the time between each tick approaching infinity as the speed of the truck approaches the speed of light.

If now, we instead had two trucks moving at the same speed relative to the road but in opposite directions. Each truck would see its light moving vertically up and down while the other truck's light moves diagonally. Hence, each truck perceives the other truck's clock ticking slower. An observer in the road's reference

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frame would see the trucks move at the same speed and, hence, the passage of time between ticks as being the same for both trucks. This concept is confusing and difficult to visualize, but it will get easier with practice. For now, though, we will continue building up the concepts of special relativity.

\*\*\* Discuss the experimental evidence for time dilation using atomic clocks or the muon experiment.

### 1.6.2 Simultaneity

Imagine a truck in its rest frame, with a light bulb in the middle and mirrors on the front and back walls. If the light bulb gives off a pulse of light, the light will travel from the center of the truck to the mirrors simultaneously and back to reach the light bulb also simultaneously. But an observer on the road watching the truck drive past will see the light bulb simultaneously emit light in both directions and simultaneously return to the bulb again. However, the light reflects off each wall's mirrors at different times in the road's frame to do this, as shown in Figure (1.11). This is because the speed of light is the same for both directions, but the truck is moving, meaning the back of the truck is moving towards where the bulb was when the light pulse was emitted, making the distance traveled shorter. The light travels a longer distance to the front wall due to the wall moving away from where it was emitted. Because of this, the observer on the road will see the light hit the mirrors at different times.

Consequently, times of events, such as when the light reaches either mirror, are different for observers in different reference frames. There is no one true order of events. For example, an observer in a faster-moving truck moving in an opposite direction would see the light reach the front wall first. However, for all observers, the light will return to the central light bulb simultaneously. If two events happen in the same position simultaneously, then this happens simultaneously in all frames of reference. This means the light returns to the center of the light bulb simultaneously in each frame.

A note here is that we are talking about when the events **actually** happen in

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### Simultaneity of Events in Different Frames

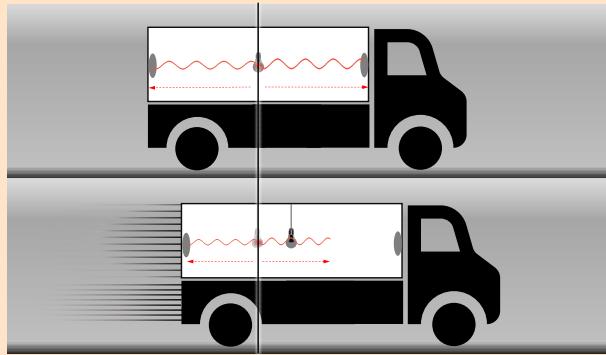


Figure 1.11: A diagram showing how two events of light reaching the two walls of the truck are simultaneous in one frame but happening at different times in another, due to truck's movement in the second frame and the speed of light remaining the same.

each frame and not when the light from these events reaches the observer, which is later due to the time it takes the light to travel to the observer. Also, I have left out any mention of length contraction of the truck, which will be introduced in the next section, and why it needs to be equal in both directions from the lightbulb for the light to simultaneously return to the light bulb.

### 1.6.3 Length Contraction

at rest in its own frame of reference, carrying a square container. A light source at the container's center emits light in all four directions

Consider a truck, in its rest frame with a square container. If a light source at the container's center emits light in all four directions it will bounce off the mirrored sides of the truck and return to the center simultaneously. We require that in the moving frame, they also all return to the center simultaneously, as multiple events that happen at a single point simultaneously in one frame, must happen simultaneously in all other frames. This time between the light being emitted and absorbed will be the dilated time, that was described in section (1.6.1).

To achieve this simultaneity in the return of the light to the bulb, the total

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length of the path of light in each of the four directions must be the same. As its speed is the same in all directions. We can work out the length of the upward path from the time dilation section (1.6.1), and this is the length the path needs to be in the horizontal directions as well, the paths can only have this length if the truck's length is contracted when moving, the exact amount of contraction can be worked geometrically, and it turns out that the ratio of the increase in the amount of time that passes before the light is reabsorbed is inversely proportional to the amount the truck is contracted in the direction of its movement.

#### Length Contraction of Moving Truck

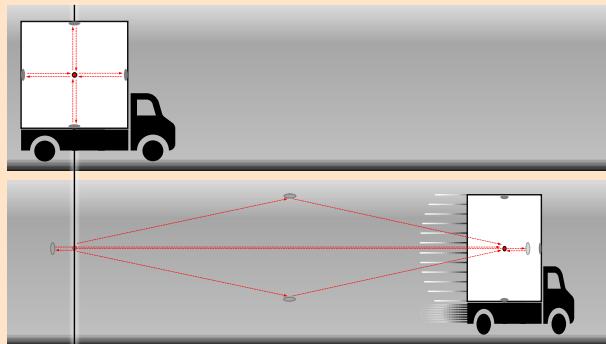


Figure 1.12: A diagram, showing a truck with a square container in its rest frame (top), emitting light from a central bulb in the four directions, with all light being reflected by the mirrored sides back to the center. In the second frame with the truck now moving (bottom), we see the truck's length contracted and what the light paths would be in this frame.

So now we know that moving objects must shrink in the direction they move to allow for a consistent speed of light in each frame. But this is not noticeable when objects move much slower than light speed. If you are unsatisfied with this, the next section will reason the need for length contraction in another way.

#### Another Illustration of Length Contraction

Suppose we have three equally distanced cars at rest on the road, as shown in Figure (1.13). If the middle car sends out a pulse of light, it will reach the front

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and back car at the same time for the road observer and the observers in the car. When it reaches them both, all the cars accelerate for a predetermined fixed amount of time. Following this acceleration period, the cars have maintained equal spacing relative to both the car observers and the observer on the road. As for all observers, the light reached the front and back cars at the same time. Now, suppose we do this a second time, with the middle car releasing another pulse. In this case, we have in the frame of the observers in the cars: again, with the front and back drivers receiving the pulses simultaneously, meaning that they will start accelerating simultaneously. After the acceleration has finished, the distances between the cars will be the same for the car observers. But for the road observer, they see the back car receive the signal first, as that car is moving towards the point where the light pulse was emitted, and the front car is moving away from it. This would mean the back car would start accelerating first to get to the final constant velocity and get closer to the front car before the front car begins to accelerate to that same final speed that the back car had already reached. This results in the cars being closer together after the acceleration. The observers in the car and the road observer disagree with what the distances between the cars are. This contraction of length between cars, in the road's frame in which the cars are moving, is called Lorentz length contraction, which means that objects that are moving faster become shorter, and the distances between the objects also become shorter.

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### Length Contraction Between Three Accelerating Cars

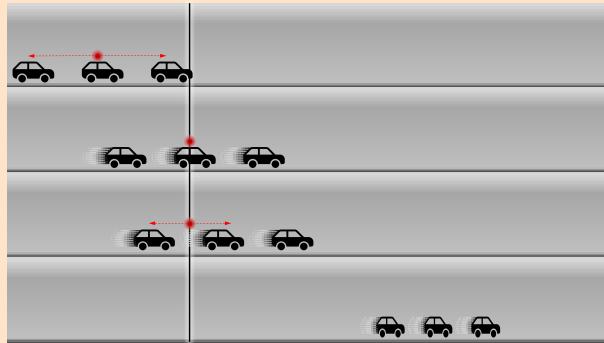


Figure 1.13: A diagram, illustrating an experiment with three cars initially at rest and equally spaced on a road. The middle car emits light that reaches the front and back cars simultaneously, triggering all cars to accelerate for a predetermined time. Now another light is emitted from the middle car after the acceleration has finished, the road observer sees this second light pulse reach the back car first, as it is moving towards where the light had been emitted, this causes it to begin accelerating before the front car. This results in the cars being closer together after acceleration, demonstrating Lorentz length contraction. However, to the car observer, the distance between the cars remains unchanged from the initial distances.

## 1.7 Doppler Effect

If we have a source at rest, emitting circular pulses of light with equal times between each pulse, we will have concentric circular pulses in this frame. But, if we move to a frame where the source is now moving to the right, each circular pulse is emitted from a different position. Due to the source moving, each pulse will be emitted closer to the right-hand side of the previous pulses, creating a bunching up of the pulses (increase in frequency) in the direction of movement and a spreading out (decrease in frequency) of the pulses in the opposite direction. This also happens in the classical version of the Doppler effect. For example, you will notice that an ambulance or police car sounds different when driving towards or away from you due to the bunching up and spreading out of the sound waves in the direction and opposite direction of the moving vehicle. However, in special relativity, we also must take the time dilation of the pulses

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into account, as there will be a longer time between each subsequent pulse. This is due to objects moving relative to an observer and therefore having their perceived time moving more slowly. This has a decreasing effect on the frequency in all directions. However, directly in the direction of movement of the source, this is outweighed by the frequency increase from the previous bunching-up effect. Since the energy of the light is proportional to the frequency, it is also increased in the direction of motion of the source due to the Doppler effects and decreased in the opposite direction.

#### Spherical Waves From a Moving Source

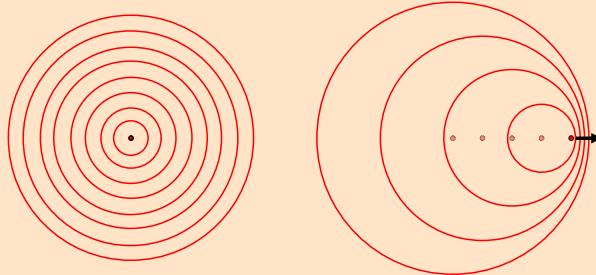


Figure 1.14: A diagram showing (left) a central source at rest emitting several circular pulses of light with equal time between each pulse, (right) the same source in a frame where it is now moving and emitting circular pulses of light, but each subsequent pulse is emitted from a different position as the source is moving, marked by a faded dot. \*\*\* could be done in latex instead

One thing not mentioned yet in this picture so far is how the light is also affected by what is called the aberration, which is the change in the angular distribution of the light at each part of the spherical pulses, which will be explained in the next section.

## 1.8 Aberration

Here, we will talk about what the Doppler effect in the previous section has yet to show, which is the effect on the angular distribution of the light in each part of the spherical pulses. We will show that there is a higher concentration of light in the direction of the source's movement, as shown in Figure (1.15).

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With the help of the length contraction section (1.6.3), Consider a truck with a spherical mirrored container, with a central bulb emitting light in all directions. In the rest frame all light reaches the spherical wall simultaneously and returns to the center bulb simultaneously as well. Then in the moving frame, we have the spherical container length contracted and the light moving at the same speed but reflecting off the same parts of the walls but at different times, and then returning to the center bulb simultaneously. For this to be true, the directions of the light must be aberrated (have their direction of propagation changed) in the way shown in the diagram to allow for this simultaneous return to the bulb.

#### Aberration of Light on a truck

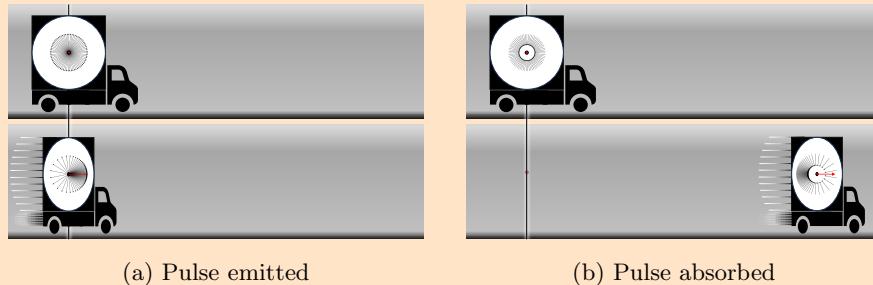


Figure 1.15: Two diagrams of a truck with a spherical container in two different frames, a light pulse is emitted from the center of the container (left) and reflected back by the mirrored wall to be absorbed in the center again (right), the truck in its rest frame (top of both figures) shows an evenly distributed outward light pulse, but in the frame, with the moving truck (bottom of both figures) the emitted light is now more concentrated in the direction of the truck's movement, which is required to allow the light to be reflected by the same part of the container and returned to the center of the truck simultaneously.

From the diagrams, you can see how light is aberrated when emitted from a moving source relative to its rest frame, and when being absorbed by a source. The faster the source is moving, the more the direction of each part of the light pulse is aberrated.

If the speed of a source was to approach the speed of light, all emitted light's propagation direction would approach the direction of movement of the source. If the source could theoretically reach the speed of light, all light would be emitted in the direction of the source but also move at the same speed. That is,

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the source would move with the emitted light, and it would not leave the vicinity of the source. The rate at which it emits the light would also tend to zero. If a photon theoretically had mass and its influence of the gravitational force moved at the speed of light, then we would not be able to feel any gravitational effects from this theoretical photon with mass outside its vicinity. This is due to all its gravitational field being propagated in the direction of its movement and at the same speed as the photon.

Another note is that in astrophysics, it must be taken into account that the Earth's view of the universe is distorted by aberration when looking through telescopes, with the aberrational effect depending on where it is in its rotation around the sun.

We will look at the combination of the Doppler effect and aberration next.

## 1.9 Relativistic Beaming

When the Doppler effect and relativistic aberration are taken together, it is known as relativistic beaming. If we have a source in its rest frame emitting a spherical pulse of light with evenly distributed angles. Then in a second frame with the source now moving, the emitted light will have from the Doppler effect, that this spherical pulse's wavelength is bunched up in the direction of movement (giving a change in the color of the light), with the aberrational effect giving the angular spread of the light at a higher concentration in the direction of the movement of the source, as shown in figures (1.16).

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### Relativistic Beaming of Emitted Light

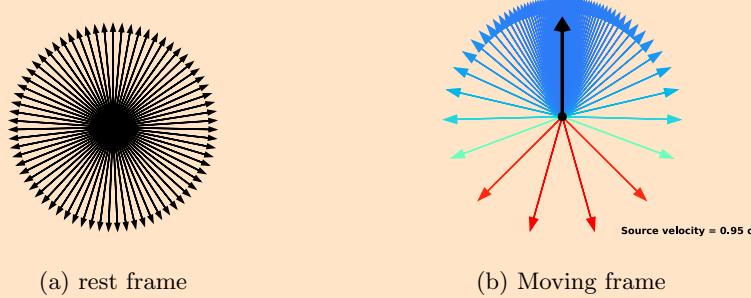


Figure 1.16: Outward light pulse from source in a rest and moving frame.

### Relativistic Beaming Received Light

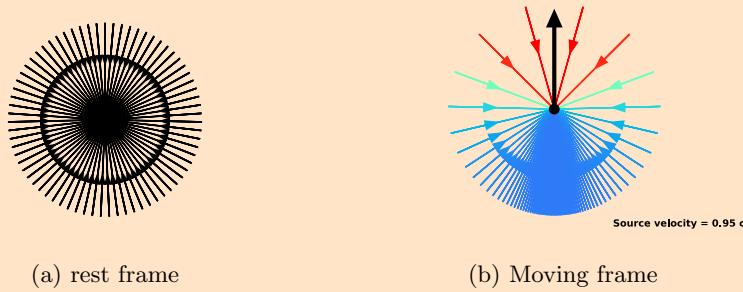


Figure 1.17: Inward light pulse from source in its rest and moving frame.

For astrophysics, we need to consider this beaming when looking at distant stars that are moving relative to us so that we can accurately calculate their brightness and the spectrum of light that they are emitting, along with some other things. We also need to consider that the position we are currently seeing the stars in is their past position due to the delay in light traveling to us on Earth, which is referred to as the retarded position. We will talk about this next.

## 1.10 Retarded Field

If a source in its rest frame continually emits pulses of light with a constant time between each pulse, we get what is shown in Figure (1.18a). If we wanted to know what this light field looked like in a frame with the source moving, we would need to take into account that the position the source emitted each pulse from is its past position (retarded position). We also have the dilated time between pulses in this moving frame, so using these and the beaming effect from the previous section we get the light field as shown in Figure (1.18b). From this, we can work out the distribution and, hence, the concentration of the light for any moving source relative to when it is at rest. If you look closely at the diagrams, you will see the aberrated rings of all the pulses, all with different points from which they were emitted, with them being more compact in the direction of the source's movement.

## Field of Light Pulses from a Source

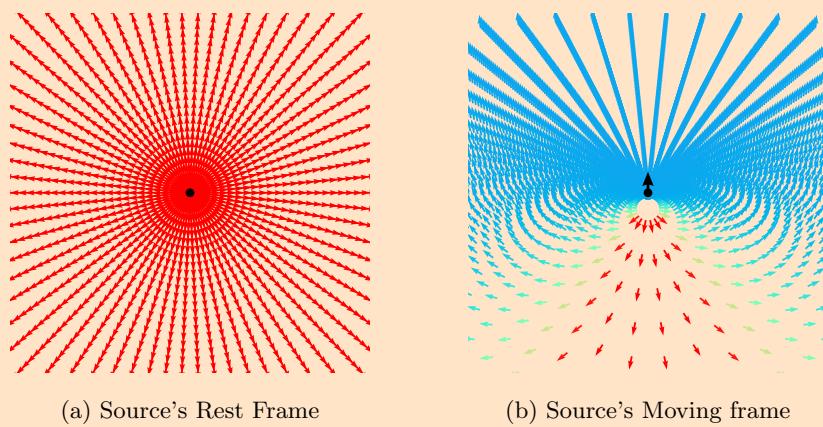


Figure 1.18: A diagram, showing multiple spherically symmetrical pulses of light from a source at rest (left), and in a corresponding inertial frame where the source is now moving (right), the colors show the Doppler effect on the light.

In particle physics, the photon is the particle that is the carrier of the electromagnetic force between charges. This light field that gives rise to the electric field in the source charge's rest frame should transform to provide the combined

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electric and magnetic field in the charge's moving frame.

The diagram of the moving source shows you where the source and light currently are. But, if you were at a particular point in the field, you would see the source at its retarded position and not where it currently is, as the light has taken time to get to you. This will be used in the next section to show that you can perceive things moving faster than light, even if they are not.

## 1.11 Velocity

We looked at how velocities at the speed of light change between different frames of reference, that is, how their directions are aberrated. However, for objects moving at speeds less than light, we need the transforming speeds to be different, as well as aberrated due to the transform needing to tend towards the classical transform as the speeds tend towards zero. To understand the general velocity transformation, some mathematical detail is needed, so we will need to brush over this for now. and instead look at how the perceived speeds of objects can be more than that of light, even if they are moving slower.

### 1.11.1 Perceived vs Actual Speed

Imagine that a ball one light year away (the distance it takes light to travel in a year) is fired directly towards you, as shown in Figure (1.19). It will take one year for the first light from when the ball starts moving to reach you. If the ball moves at three-quarters of the speed of light, it will hit you in four-thirds of a year (a year and four months) after it is fired. The last light from the ball will reach you just as the ball hits you. As you perceive it, the time between the first and last light from the moving ball is four months. During those four months, you will see the ball start at its initial position and travel a distance of one light-year. So, to you, the ball appears to have been moving three times faster than light. This is just how it appears to the observer due to the delay in the light signal, giving the latency in how the system is observed.

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### Perceived Faster Than Light Movement

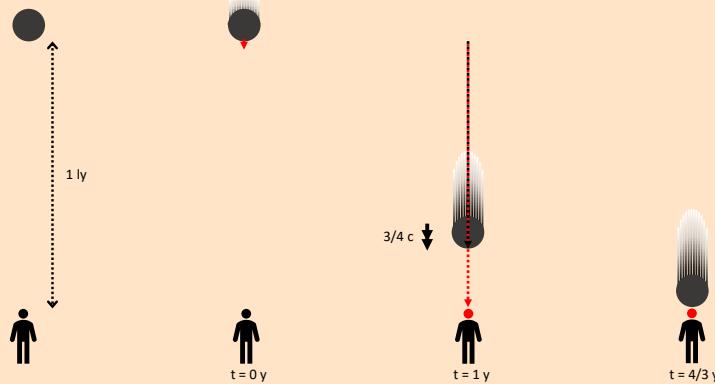


Figure 1.19: A diagram demonstrating the perceived speed of a ball vs its actual speed ... the red arrow represents the light being emitted from when the ball starts moving from its position one light year away...

This shows how important it is to consider the delay in the light from objects when observing relativistic systems. This view is called the delayed/retarded view, meaning what we see now are objects in their past positions, and the further things are from us, the further into the past we are currently seeing them.

## 1.12 Summary

A key early concept was that light traveled through a medium called the luminiferous aether. The Michelson-Morley experiment attempted to measure Earth's motion relative to this aether. Surprisingly, no difference was found in the speed of light regardless of direction through this proposed aether. This conflicted with the intuitive addition of velocities, discredited the aether theory, and led Einstein to propose light's constant speed in all inertial frames of reference as a fundamental principle.

Special relativity emerged from this insight that light's speed in a vacuum is constant for all observers, regardless of the light source's speed relative to each observer. This required rethinking the concepts of time intervals and distances

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between points to accommodate light's fixed speed. This led to the requirement that a clock moving relative to an observer ticks slower from the observer's perspective while also being contracted in the direction of its motion. This was shown in Figure (1.10) and Figure (1.12). The faster an object moves relative to an observer, the more its length contracts and its time dilates to the observer. It also led to the simultaneity of events not being absolute. For example, light emitted from the middle of a moving truck reaches the front and back walls simultaneously for an observer at rest in the truck. But an observer standing still on the road sees the light hit both walls at different times, as shown in Figure (1.11). There is no universal "now" at a distance-observers relate times of events differently.

Classical physics provides an excellent approximation of reality at low speeds. Relativistic effects only become readily noticeable at speeds approaching that of light. We do not experience them because motions in everyday life are very slow relative to that of light, which is roughly three hundred million meters per second.

When it comes to velocities, they combine differently than in classical physics. However, we must ensure that the transforms reduce to the intuitive addition of velocities of classical physics at low speeds while accommodating light's constant rate in all frames of reference. This leads to initially bizarre outcomes such as **apparent** faster-than-light motion emerging from how relativistic optical effects play out across distances, which is due to the delay in light signals from objects at a distance. Nevertheless, special relativity gives a truer, more accurate picture of reality.

Due to space-time effects on wave propagation, we also have seen that the emitted light's frequencies shift (doppler effect) for a moving source, and that light is concentrated in the direction of the source's motion (aberrational effect). Together, both intensely focus light in the direction of rapidly moving objects, giving relativistic beaming.

These effects will all be explained more fully with math in the coming chapters, along with other effects that require the math to fully understand, as well as

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new energy, mass, and momentum conservation laws. We will derive everything step by step, starting with the transformation of positions and times between reference frames.

## 1.13 Definitions

### 1.13.1 Mathematical Framework

**Reference frame:** An abstract coordinate system that is taken to be at rest consisting of three spatial and one time axis. The origin, orientation, and scale of its axis are specified by a set of points in space. The purpose of it is to provide a standardized means of defining the position and orientation of objects at any instant in time.

**Inertial reference frame:** A reference frame that is not undergoing any acceleration. An observer's reference frame is inertial if they do not feel a force acting on them.

**Proper/Rest frame:** This is the reference frame of the observer or object itself.

**Primed frame:** A reference frame that is moving relative to the current frame.

**frame velocity:** The velocity of a reference frame relative to the current reference frame.

**Frame transform:** The changing of coordinates and other quantities in a reference frame into their corresponding values in another reference frame.

**Galilean/Classical frame transform:** Transformation of coordinates and physical quantities according to Newtonian physics between two frames of reference.

**Relativistic frame transform:** The changing of the spatial coordinates, the time coordinate, and other physical quantities into their corresponding values in a different inertial reference frame using equations from special relativity.

**Observer:** An entity/thing with an associated frame of reference/system of coordinates, with respect to which you can measure objects' position, orientation,

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and other properties.

**Event:** An occurrence that can be specified by a unique combination of the three spatial and one time coordinates. These four coordinates, together, form a point in spacetime.

**Simultaneity:** Within a reference frame, two or more events are simultaneous if they occur at the same time within it. Classically, if any two events are simultaneous in one reference frame, they are also simultaneous in another. This is not true in special relativity, and the order of events can depend on the frame of reference.

**Retarded position:** The previous position of a field's source, that an observer sees it at, due to the time delay between when a moving source emits a field and when the observer detects that field.

### 1.13.2 The Mechanics

**Aether:** A proposed medium that filled the vacuum of space that light propagated through.

**Vacuum:** Empty space with no matter and negligible amount of effects from fields.

**Lorentz length contraction:** The shortening of an object along the direction of its motion relative to an observer (relative to the object at rest).

**Time dilation:** The slowing of the passing of time for objects in motion relative to an observer, compared to the passing of time for the observer.

**Doppler effect:** The change of a wave's frequency due to the motion of its source relative to an observer. This is due to the bunching up of the wave in the direction of movement of the source and the stretching of the wave in the opposite direction, as well as the dilation of time between two parts of the emitted wave.

**Aberration of light:** The changing of the direction of the propagation of light when moving into another reference frame.

**Relativistic beaming:** The accumulation of the Doppler effect and aberration

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of light, and how it affects the amount of light and its frequency emitted at different angles from a moving source. This effect can be extended to any wave or field emitted at the speed of light from a moving source.

**Retarded field:** A moving source's field, where at each point has been propagated at the speed of light from the retarded position of the source...

**Field:** ...

**Light year:** ...

### 1.13.3 Definitions for Later

**Transform Invariant:** ...

**Postulates:**

\*\*\* I could add a section about Skewing and Terrell Rotation in Special Relativity

## Chapter 2

# Position, Time and Velocity

Now that we have learned about the concepts of special relativity, we can use them and let the mathematics begin. Starting with classical relativity, which will give us an understanding of how to transform coordinates between reference frames. This will give us something to compare special relativity to later, to help with our intuition.

What we learn here will be directly used in all of the following chapters, to derive more of the foundational concepts of the theory. How the positions and times of events are transformed between two inertial frames to allow the speed of light to stay constant, is what all the other concepts of special relativity are built upon.

In this chapter, we will start with how swapping between two inertial frames works classically. Then using the two assumed facts that are used as the basis of reasoning for special relativity, we will find out how to swap between frames in special relativity, by following a similar path as we did in the previous conceptual chapter. First by deriving the time dilation, and length contraction in order to find the full transform of the space and time coordinates between two inertial frames. We will come across a very useful quantity which we will denote with a  $\gamma$ , this quantity will be used throughout this book to simplify equations. After this, we will look at what the transform for infinitesimal lengths and

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changes in time looks like and use this to derive how velocities and accelerations change when swapping between inertial frames. By the end of this chapter you should understand the coordinate transforms conceptually and mathematically when swapping between two frames, and also how to derive the velocity and acceleration transforms.

## 2.1 Classical Relativity

Classical (Galilean) relativity was the previous theory of how to transform coordinates in different inertial frames. It is based on two assumptions. No matter what the relative speed of an inertial frame is, you would observe the following within that frame:

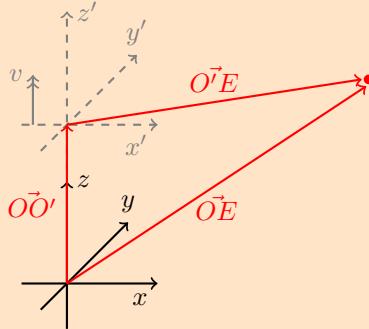
- The distance between objects being the same.
- Time flowing at the same rate, with the time of events remaining the same.

Before special relativity, it was assumed that distances between two positions were the same for all observers. That is, the first observer would see a stick and measure it to be the same length as another observer moving relative to them would measure it to be. The other assumption is that time is constant for everyone, that is, clocks move at the same rate for each observer and if a particle was to emit light at a particular time. This light would be emitted at the same time for all observers.

For classical relativity, if we have two observers moving relative to each other at constant velocity and want to find how each observer would describe the positions and motion of a particle relative to them, we need to know the positions and times in one observer's frame and how to transform them into the other observers frame. That is, if we have how one observer would describe the coordinates of a particle over time relative to them and we want to now know the coordinates of the particle with respect to the other observer, we need to know how the transformation of coordinates works.

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So let us see how the mathematics works for the classical coordinate system transform between two inertial frames, by looking at the coordinates of an event in an initial reference frame with a second inertial frame's coordinate axis moving relative to the initial frame's axis, illustrated in Figure (2.1)



**Figure 2.1: An event in initial frame with a primed frame's axis moving relative to its axis.** This shows an initial frame with its associated  $x,y,z$ -coordinate system at rest in its frame, with origin  $O$ . There is also an  $x',y',z'$ -coordinate system with origin  $O'$  associated with a "primed" frame, at position  $\vec{O}O'$  in the initial frame. It is moving at speed  $v$  in the  $z$ -direction relative to the initial frame. An event  $E$  in this initial frame is described by a set of spatial and time coordinates  $\vec{OE} = (x, y, z)$  and  $t$ . We choose the time to be zero in both frames when both axes overlapped, so that  $t$  is also the time from when they overlapped. We also show  $\vec{O}'E$  which represents the vector from the primed origin to the event in the initial frame.

As shown in the diagram we have an event in this frame located at

$$\vec{OE} = (x, y, z) \quad (2.1)$$

at time  $t$  from when both axes overlapped and a prime frame's axis origin  $O'$  moving at relative velocity  $v$  in the  $z$ -direction so that in the initial frame we have

$$\vec{O}O' = (0, 0, vt) \quad (2.2)$$

Now to swap into the primed frame's coordinates, we need to recall from the previous assumptions that distances are conserved, with the length and direc-

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tions of all the vectors between  $O$ ,  $O'$  and  $E$  the same in each frame, and time flows at the same rate ( $t' = t$ ), from this knowledge and Figure (2.1) we have the event's coordinates described by

$$(\vec{O'E})' = (x', y', z') = \vec{OE} - \vec{OO'} = (x, y, z - vt) \quad (2.3)$$

We can also write the initial frame's event coordinates in terms of the primed coordinates

$$\vec{OE} = (x, y, z) = \vec{OO'} + \vec{O'E} = (x', y', z' + vt') \quad (2.4)$$

so we have  $x = x'$ ,  $y = y'$ ,  $t = t'$ , and for the z-components

$$\begin{aligned} z' &= z - vt \\ z &= z' + vt' \end{aligned} \quad (2.5)$$

This shows the symmetry between the frames. If we were originally in the primed frame we would have the initial frame now moving at  $-v$  relative to it, so we would expect that the inverse transformation would replace one frame's coordinates with the other and have the opposite frame velocity instead. So the inverse of going from primed frame to original is just a matter of swapping all primed coordinates with original coordinates and changing the sign on the frame velocity, this can be seen from starting at time  $t = 0$  we have the frame's origins overlapping and that there is a symmetry from here, we have the freedom to choose either frame to be the original, as no frame is particularly special and depending which one you pick the relative velocity is either  $v$  or  $-v$ . We will have the same rules in special relativity later on when we want to get the inverse transform.

We can write the full description of the position and time transform for an event as

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$$x' = x$$

$$y' = y$$

$$z' = z - vt$$

at time

$$t' = t$$

(2.6)

These are the equations that define classical relativity, we can compare this to the equations of the coordinate transforms in special relativity later. They define the event's location relative to whichever frame's axis that we are in. The special relativistic equations later will look similar but with an extra factor in the z-component and the time no longer the same in both frames.

You might have noticed that the direction of the second frame is in the upward z-direction instead of being to the right in the case of the truck diagrams from the previous chapter, this is to help us when we use spherical polar coordinates later and to help see the symmetries.

## 2.2 Postulates of Special Relativity

For classical relativity, we started with two assumptions. It turns out that these assumptions need to be thrown away, as they contradict the experimental evidence that the speed of light is constant for every observer and frame. We replace them with two new assumptions, called the postulates of special relativity.

- 
1. The speed of light in a vacuum is the same in all inertial/non-accelerating frames of reference.
  2. The laws of physics and outcome of experiments are the same in all inertial frames of reference. If an observer in an inertial reference frame carries out an experiment, they would find the same result if they had carried it out within a different inertial frame instead.

The first postulate here will be the most important to us in deriving the transform equations of special relativity and will be used to show how time is dilated. The second postulate has a consequence that if two events happen simultaneously at an overlapping position in one frame, then they will also happen simultaneously in an overlapping position in any other inertial frame, this does not have to be at the same coordinate as it was in the initial frame. We will now use these with the concept of a light clock.

### 2.3 Time Dilation

Time passes more slowly for things moving relative to you, this is called time dilation. To explain why it happens we will use the simple concept of a light clock. It consists of light bouncing between two mirrors. It keeps time by measuring when light returns to the first mirror, counting it as one tick of its clock, as shown in Figure (2.2).

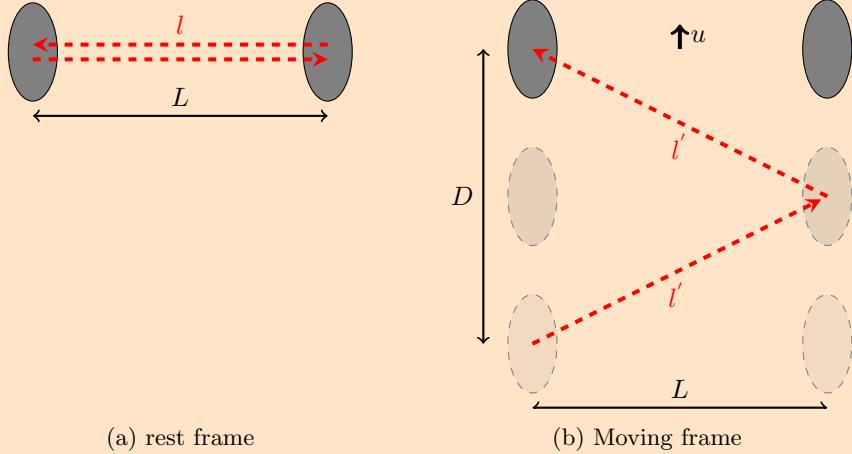


Figure 2.2: **Light clock showing time dilation.** The light clock keeps time by counting each time the light makes a return journey when bouncing between two mirrors with length  $L$  between them, the diagram shows the mirror's rest frame (left) and a frame with them moving at speed  $u$  (right). In this second frame, there is a distance  $D$  between where the light was reflected by the left mirror and where it returned to it. For this, the light had to travel a diagonal distance of  $2l'$  to return.

The light in the clock, takes a time  $\Delta\tau$  in the clock's rest frame to make the return journey. We can see from Figure (2.2a) that in the rest frame, the distance the light travels to the mirror and back in this time is

$$2L = c\Delta\tau. \quad (2.7)$$

The distance the mirrors move during this return journey in the moving frame is

$$D = u\Delta t' = -v\Delta t', \quad (2.8)$$

where  $\Delta t'$  is the time it took light to return in the moving frame and  $u$  is the speed of the mirrors, which is in the opposite direction of the movement of the primed frame relative to the rest frame, that is  $u = -v$ . The distance light travels in this time is

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$$2l' = c\Delta t', \quad (2.9)$$

This is the hypotenuse of a triangle formed by  $D$  and  $2L$ , so we have the square of the hypotenuse equal to the square of the other two lengths:

$$c^2\Delta t'^2 = v^2\Delta t'^2 + c^2\Delta\tau^2 \quad (2.10)$$

rearranging to find the time it took in the primed frame relative to the time in the rest frame, we find

$$\Delta t' = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}\Delta\tau = \gamma\Delta\tau \quad (2.11)$$

with

$$\gamma = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}. \quad (2.12)$$

This is used throughout special relativity to simplify equations. We find from this equation that the time for the return journey in the frame with the clock moving is longer relative to its rest frame,

$$\Delta t' \geq \Delta\tau \quad (2.13)$$

So we take this outcome as the time taken between two events in the same position in the moving frame taking longer than in the rest frame of the clock, due to the longer distance it must travel at the same speed.

\*\*\* conclusion statement

## 2.4 Length Contraction

An object's size gets smaller in the direction of movement compared to when it is at rest, this is called length contraction. To explain why it happens we will

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use a system similar to the light clock in the previous section. This new system also has light moving perpendicular as well as parallel the the second frame's movement, as shown in Figure (2.3)

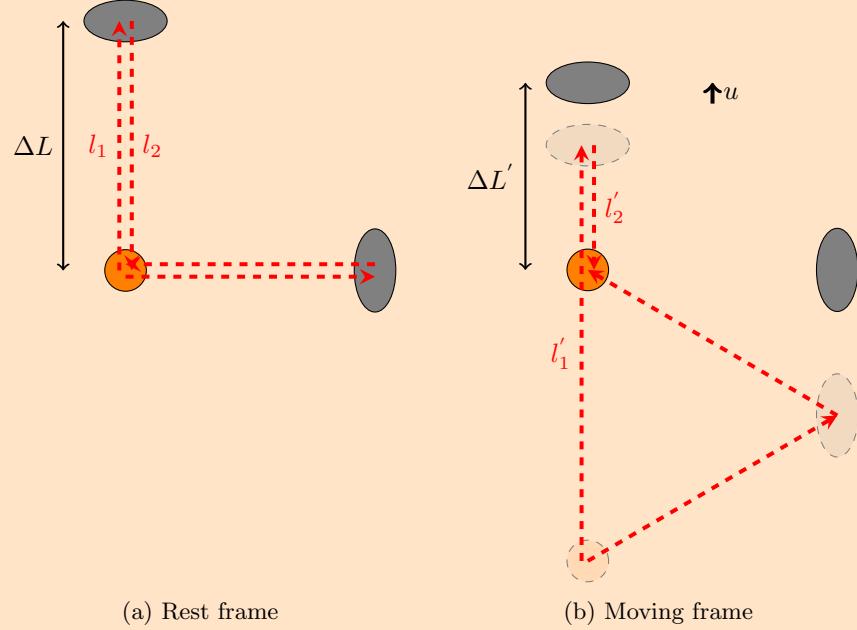


Figure 2.3: **Light paths showing the need for length contraction.** A central orange bulb emits light in two directions, with all light being reflected by the mirrors back to reach the central bulb simultaneously. This is shown at rest, fig (a), and in another inertial frame with the system now moving at speed  $u$ , fig (b), with its length now having to be contracted in the direction of movement to allow for the simultaneous return of light to the bulb. The length between the bulb and front mirror is shown as  $\Delta L$  and  $\Delta L'$  in each frame. The paths the light took to the front mirror  $l_1$  and back  $l_2$  are shown in the rest frame with the corresponding paths  $l'_1$  and  $l'_2$  in the moving frame.

If we have a system as described in Figure (2.3). Since the light returns simultaneously in the rest frame, we need the light to also return simultaneously in the second frame. Multiple events that happen at a single point simultaneously in one frame, must happen simultaneously in all other frames. The time between the light being emitted and absorbed will be the dilated time from the previous section. This can be seen as the perpendicular light path in this and the light clock's setup is the same path. In the moving frame, to achieve this simultaneity

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in the return of the light to the bulb, the length of the full path of light from the central bulb to the front mirror and back ( $l'_1 + l'_2$ ) must be the same as the perpendicular path, due to the speed of light being the same for both paths, we can work out the length of the sideways paths from the time dilation section, and this is the length the total path needs to be in the forward directions as well. We will find that the paths can only have the distance between the bulb and the front mirror is contracted in the direction of movement. Note that there is no contraction in the perpendicular direction to the movement due to the paradox explained in Figure (1.9).

In the moving frame, the pulse sent forward has a distance

$$l'_1 = ct'_1 = \Delta L' + ut'_1 \quad (2.14)$$

to travel to get to the front mirror that is moving away at speed  $u$  from the point it was emitted. Where  $t'_1$  is the time taken to get there,  $\Delta L'$  is the distance between the bulb and the mirror in front. After this, the light then must travel back to the bulb a distance

$$l'_2 = ct'_2 = \Delta L' - ut'_2. \quad (2.15)$$

Where  $t'_2$  is the time taken to return to the bulb from the front mirror, both of these give the two times as

$$t'_1 = \frac{\Delta L'}{c-u} \quad (2.16)$$

and

$$t'_2 = \frac{\Delta L'}{c+u}. \quad (2.17)$$

Adding both these times together gives the total dilated time of return as

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$$\Delta t' = \Delta L' \left( \frac{1}{c+u} + \frac{1}{c-u} \right) = \frac{\Delta L'}{c} \frac{1}{1-u^2/c^2} = \frac{\Delta L'}{c} \frac{1}{1-v^2/c^2} = \gamma^2 \frac{\Delta L'}{c} \quad (2.18)$$

where we used  $u = -v$ . Now from this and using the time dilation equation, we have

$$c\Delta t' = c\gamma\Delta t = \gamma\Delta L = \gamma^2\Delta L' \quad (2.19)$$

Finally, this leads to the length from the bulb to the front mirror in the primed frame to be

$$\Delta L' = \frac{1}{\gamma} \Delta L. \quad (2.20)$$

This means that the distances in the direction of movement of an object are contracted in its direction of movement compared to the rest frame of the object, that is

$$\Delta L' \leq \Delta L. \quad (2.21)$$

\*\*\* conclusion statement:

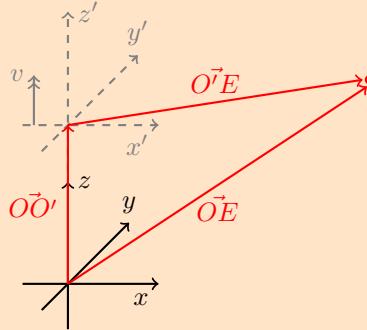
Moving objects and the distance between them are therefore shorter than in a frame with them moving compared to in the rest frame of the objects.

## 2.5 Position and Time Transformation

We have looked at the dilation between two different times at the same location and the contraction between two different positions at the same time. We will use both these concepts to help us see how the combination of the time and the position coordinate, known as an event, transforms when we swap frames. For the derivation of the coordinate transformation of an event between two inertial frames, we will follow a similar line of thought as in classical relativity in Section

---

(2.1). Starting with the same diagram and applying what we have learned from the time dilation and length contraction sections, to be consistent with the postulates of special relativity, we will derive the transformation equations, known as the Lorentz transformation.



**Figure 2.4: An event in initial frame with a primed frame's axis moving relative to it.** This is a diagram of an initial frame with its associated  $x, y, z$ -coordinate system at rest in its frame, with origin  $O$ . There is also an  $x', y', z'$ -coordinate system with origin  $O'$  associated with a "primed" frame, at position  $O\vec{O}'$  in the initial frame. It is moving at speed  $v$  in the  $z$ -direction relative to the initial frame. An event  $E$  in the initial frame is described by a set of spatial and time coordinates  $\vec{OE} = (x, y, z)$  and  $t$ . We choose the time to be zero in both frames when both axes overlapped, so that  $t$  is also the time from when they overlapped. We also show  $\vec{O}'E$  which represents the vector from the primed origin to the event in the initial frame.

As shown in the diagram, we are in the initial frame with origin  $O$  defined by coordinates  $(0, 0, 0)$  and the primed frame is moving in the  $z$ -direction at velocity  $v$  such that the position of the primed origin in the initial frame is

$$\vec{O}\vec{O}' = (0, 0, vt) \quad (2.22)$$

at time  $t$  from when the origins overlapped. If there is an event at position

$$\vec{OE} = (x, y, z) \quad (2.23)$$

the event is described by

---


$$E = (x, y, z, t) \quad (2.24)$$

then in the primed frame, we will the event described by the primed coordinates that we want to transform into, as

$$E' = (x', y', z', t') \quad (2.25)$$

The primed frame's axis and coordinates are moving relative to the initial frame, so the distance between the primed axis origin and the event would be contracted in the initial frame relative to these coordinates in the primed frame, that is  $z = z'/\gamma$ , giving the distance between the primed axis origin and the event in the initial frame in terms of the primed z-coordinate as

$$\vec{OE} = (x, y, z'/\gamma) \quad (2.26)$$

Noting that we have the x and y-components unaffected, due to the cannon and ball thought experiment from the first chapter. From the diagram, we can see

$$\vec{OE} = \vec{OO'} + \vec{O'E} \quad (2.27)$$

subbing each component into this equation for the z-direction and rearranging, we get the primed z-coordinate of the event in terms of the initial frame's z-coordinate and time as

$$z' = \gamma(z - vt) \quad (2.28)$$

If we were instead in the primed frame we would have  $(\vec{OE})' = (x, y, z/\gamma)$ ,  $(\vec{OO'})' = (0, 0, vt')$ , and  $(\vec{O'E})' = (x, y, z')$ , doing the same for these we have

$$z = \gamma(z' + vt') \quad (2.29)$$

This shows the expected symmetry between the frames because if we were originally in the primed frame we would have the initial frame moving instead at  $-v$

---

in the z-direction relative to the primed frame, so we would expect that the inverse transformation would replace one frame's coordinates with the other and have the negative of the velocity instead. Now substituting the z transforms into each other we have

$$z = \gamma(\gamma(z - vt) + vt') \quad (2.30)$$

and rearranging gives

$$t' = \gamma \left( \left( \frac{1}{\gamma^2} - 1 \right) \frac{z}{v} + t \right) \quad (2.31)$$

with  $\gamma^{-2} = 1 - v^2/c^2$  leading to the prime frames time for the event given in initial frames coordinates as

$$t' = \gamma \left( t - \frac{vz}{c^2} \right) \quad (2.32)$$

again if we want the inverse transform from prime to initial frame we can swap the prime and initial frame coordinates and put a minus in front of the frame velocity.

We now have the full description of the transformation of the position and time of an event as

$$x' = x$$

$$y' = y$$

$$z' = \gamma(z - vt)$$

at time

$$t' = \gamma\left(t - \frac{vz}{c^2}\right) \quad (2.33)$$

from the overlap of coordinate axis.

with

$$\gamma = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

In the time transform equation the  $\frac{vz}{c^2}$  term is the cause of simultaneous events in one inertial frame no longer being simultaneous in another inertial frame, and the  $\gamma$  factor, is the term that causes the overall change in how fast time flows relative in each frame. In the spatial coordinate transform equations the  $vt$  factor is due to both axes moving away from each other and the  $\gamma$  factor is the cause of the change of lengths in the direction of the frame's movement. Figure (2.5) shows how points representing the coordinates are transformed between the frames.

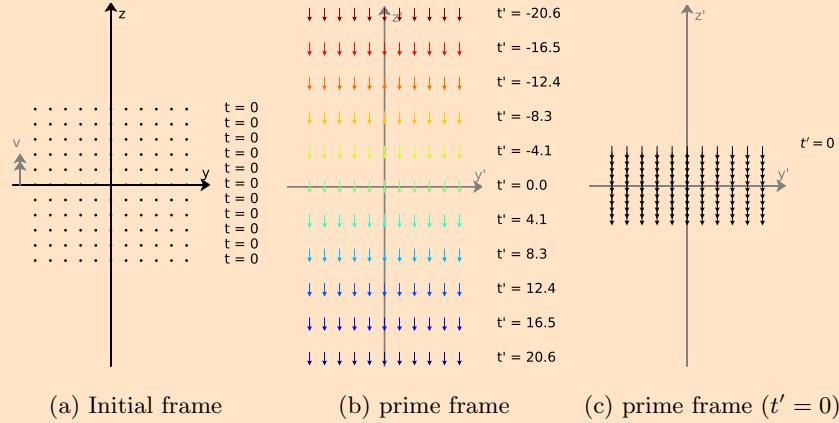


Figure 2.5: **Transformation of coordinates into a primed frame.** A diagram, showing a grid of points, representing initial frame coordinates, at time  $t = 0$  that are at rest in their frame (left), giving the direct transformation, using the transform equations, into the moving primed frame (middle) where the points are now moving in the negative  $z'$ -direction with  $z' = \gamma z$ , the colors and labels show the desynchronization of the primed times  $t' = -\frac{v}{c^2} \gamma z$ , the next figure (right) shows where these points would be when they are synchronized with the origin's time  $t' = 0$ , which can be worked out to be  $(z' = \frac{z}{\gamma})$ .

This diagram shows stationary points representing coordinates in the initial frame. In the primed frames these points are positioned at  $z' = \gamma z$  and now moving at  $-v$ , they are transformed using the transformation equations to points that are more spread out in the primed frame, but the times they are located at each point have desynchronized times. Therefore to find these initial frame points in the primed frame at the synchronized time of  $t' = 0$ , we must propagate the points to that time, that is  $z' = \frac{z}{\gamma}$ , as shown in figure (2.5c).

we will later see a more natural interpretation of the coordinate transforms when we get to the retarded chapter, giving a better understanding of why the time transform is the way it is.

### 2.5.1 Infinitesimal Changes of Coordinates

To get the velocity transform equations we will first need the equations to transform the displacement between two positions and times, and take them in the

---

limit as the changes go to zero. That is when we have infinitesimal changes of coordinates. If we want to know how the displacement between two coordinates  $\vec{R}_1 = (x_1, y_1, z_1)$  and  $\vec{R}_2 = (x_2, y_2, z_2)$  transforms, we can take the difference of the transforms of both the coordinates as follows

$$\begin{aligned} x'_2 - x'_1 &= x_2 - x_1 \\ y'_2 - y'_1 &= y_2 - y_1 \\ z'_2 - z'_1 &= \gamma(z_2 - vt_2) - \gamma(z_1 - vt_1) \\ t'_2 - t'_1 &= \gamma\left(t_2 - \frac{v}{c^2}z_2\right) - \gamma\left(t_1 - \frac{v}{c^2}z_1\right) \end{aligned} \tag{2.34}$$

rearranging and replacing the difference of the each the first and second coordinates,  $\Delta\vec{R} = (\Delta x, \Delta y, \Delta z) = (x_2 - x_1, y_2 - y_1, z_2 - z_1)$ , giving the displacement transform as

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta x' &= \Delta x \\ \Delta y' &= \Delta y \\ \Delta z' &= \gamma(\Delta z - v\Delta t) \\ \Delta t' &= \gamma\left(\Delta t - \frac{v}{c^2}\Delta z\right) \end{aligned} \tag{2.35}$$

We can also get the differential quantities when we take infinitesimal changes, which have the same form

$$\begin{aligned} dx' &= dx \\ dy' &= dy \\ dz' &= \gamma(dz - vdt) \\ dt' &= \gamma\left(dt - \frac{v}{c^2}dz\right) \end{aligned} \tag{2.36}$$

### 2.5.2 Transforms with Low Relative Frame Speed Change

For the coordinate transforms in the previous section we get back the classical coordinates transform for frame velocities much smaller than the speed of light,

---

i.e. with  $v \ll c$  we have  $\gamma \approx 1$  we get

$$t' \approx t \quad (2.37)$$

$$z' \approx z - vt \quad (2.38)$$

which is the expected result for the classical coordinates transform, and what we are used to seeing things work in everyday life. The influence of the gamma factor is shown in Figure (2.6).

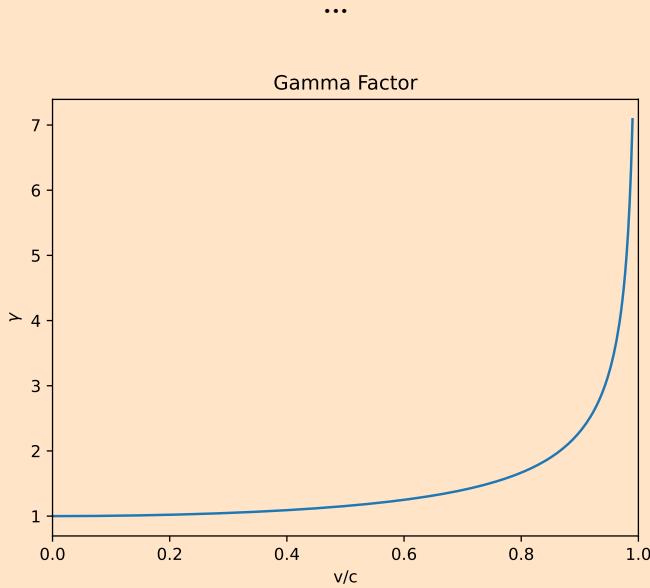


Figure 2.6: A diagram, showing the magnitude of the gamma factor with increasing ratio of frame speed to the speed of light, with  $\gamma$  tending to infinity as  $v/c \rightarrow 1$ .

## 2.6 Velocity

from taking the infinitesimals of equations from eq. (2.33), we have the velocities as

---


$$\begin{aligned}
u_x' &= \frac{dx'}{dt'} = \frac{dx}{\gamma \left( dt - \frac{vdz}{c^2} \right)} \\
u_y' &= \frac{dy'}{dt'} = \frac{dy}{\gamma \left( dt - \frac{vdz}{c^2} \right)} \\
u_z' &= \frac{dz'}{dt'} = \frac{\gamma(dz - vdt)}{\gamma \left( dt - \frac{vdz}{c^2} \right)}
\end{aligned} \tag{2.39}$$

now dividing the top and bottom of the fraction by  $dt$  we can give the equations in their vector form as

$$\mathbf{U}' = \frac{1}{\gamma \left( 1 - \frac{v}{c^2} u_z \right)} \begin{pmatrix} u_x \\ u_y \\ \gamma(u_z - v) \end{pmatrix}$$

at position  $\mathbf{R}'$  and time  $t'$

the generalized velocity transform derived in appendix (todo) is

$$\mathbf{U}' = \frac{1}{\gamma} \frac{\mathbf{u}_s + \left[ \frac{\gamma - 1}{\|\mathbf{V}\|^2} (\mathbf{u}_s \cdot \mathbf{V}) - \gamma \right] \mathbf{V}}{1 - \frac{\mathbf{u}_s \cdot \mathbf{V}}{c^2}} \tag{2.41}$$

with  $\mathbf{V}$  being the frame's velocity in any generalized direction, instead of just being in the z-direction

## 2.7 Acceleration

To find how the acceleration of a particle transforms for an observer in two different frames we take the differential of the velocity transform eq. (2.40) and use the differentiation rules for two generic functions  $f$  and  $g$ :  $d(gf) = f dg + g df$ , and  $d[f(g(x))] = dg(x) * df(g(x))$

---


$$\begin{aligned}
d\mathbf{U}' &= \frac{1}{\gamma \left(1 - \frac{v}{c^2} u_z\right)} \begin{pmatrix} du_x \\ du_y \\ \gamma du_z \end{pmatrix} + \frac{\gamma \frac{v}{c^2} du_z}{\gamma^2 \left(1 - \frac{v}{c^2} u_z\right)^2} \begin{pmatrix} u_x \\ u_y \\ \gamma(u_z - v) \end{pmatrix} \\
&= \dots \\
&= \frac{1}{\gamma \left(1 - \frac{v}{c^2} u_z\right)^2} \begin{pmatrix} du_x + \frac{v}{c^2} (u_x du_z - u_z du_x) \\ du_y + \frac{v}{c^2} (u_y du_z - u_z du_y) \\ \frac{1}{\gamma} du_z \end{pmatrix}
\end{aligned} \tag{2.42}$$

Now, divide by the time differential from the previous chapter to get the acceleration transform

$$\mathbf{a}' = \frac{1}{\gamma^2 \left(1 - \frac{v}{c^2} u_z\right)^3} \begin{pmatrix} a_x + \frac{v}{c^2} (u_x a_z - u_z a_x) \\ a_y + \frac{v}{c^2} (u_y a_z - u_z a_y) \\ \frac{1}{\gamma} a_z \end{pmatrix} \tag{2.43}$$

at position  $\mathbf{R}'$  and time  $t'$

### 2.7.1 Generalized Acceleration Transform

3 acceleration (check this)

$$\mathbf{a}' = \frac{1}{\gamma^3 \left(1 - \frac{(\mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v})}{c^2}\right)^3} \left[ \gamma \left(1 - \frac{(\mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v})}{c^2}\right) \mathbf{a} + \frac{\gamma(\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{v})}{c^2} \mathbf{u} + (1 - \gamma)(\mathbf{a} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{v}}) \cdot \hat{\mathbf{v}} \right] \tag{2.44}$$

at position  $\mathbf{R}'$  and time  $t'$

## 2.8 Paths of Particles

can you derive how paths of a particles transform into a second frame

---

## 2.9 Summary

meaningful conclusion:

-[ ] summarise the key points and how they relate to other parts of book -[ ] discuss implications and applications of chapters concepts -[ ] draw connections between this chapter and other chapters -[ ] what this will allow us to look at later -[ ] pose points to reflect on -[ ] give questions still to be answered which will be in later chapters -[ ] final sentence to allow this to flow into next chapter

## 2.10 Variables

$E$  : an event given by the set of spatial and time coordinates.

$O, O'$  : Position of proper and primed axis' origin, given by the set of spatial and time coordinates.

$\langle S \rangle$  : an inertial reference frame.

$\langle S' \rangle$  : a second inertial reference frame moving relative to inertial frame  $\langle S \rangle$ .

$v$  : is the velocity of second reference frame relative to the first reference frame

$c$  : the speed that light travels in empty space when it is not impeded by matter and fields.

$\vec{r} = (x, y, z, t)$  : are the position and time coordinates of event in current inertial reference frame

$\vec{r}' = (x', y', z', t')$  : are the corresponding position and time coordinates of the event in another inertial reference frame, referred to as the primed frame, and denoted with a '.

$\tau$  : the time of an event in the rest frame of an observer.

$\delta x, \delta y, \delta z, \delta t$  : ...

$dx, dy, dz, dt$  : ...

$\delta x', \delta y', \delta z', \delta t'$  : ...

$\delta \tau, \delta \tau'$  : ...

$\vec{U} = (u_x, u_y, u_z)$  : ...

---

$$\vec{U}' = (u'_x, u'_y, u'_z) : \dots$$

$$d\vec{U}, d\vec{U}' : \dots$$

$$\vec{a}, \vec{a}' : \dots$$

$\gamma$  : a relativistic factor given by  $1/\sqrt{1 - v^2/c^2}$  which determines how much of an effect the transform of the coordinates deviates from the classical transform.

It is only significant at relative frame speeds close to that of light.

$$W : \dots$$

$$D, D' : \dots$$

$$L : \dots$$

## Chapter 3

# Observers Delayed World View

- Explain that it's not normally included in SR sources, and why it is included here

Light travels extremely fast (roughly 300,000,000 m/s) compared to other everyday speeds we are used to. In the blink of an eye, light could travel around the world twice. We do not need to normally worry about the delay in the light signal, as the time to propagate the distances in our everyday world is very short, so the signal can be approximated as being instantaneous, therefore ignoring the more complex modeling of the delayed signal. But when it comes to particle physics or astronomy, we might be dealing with speeds close to that of light or also huge distances, e.g. light has taken 152,000 years to travel from the Andromeda galaxy, so we are currently seeing this galaxy where it was and how it looked 152,000 years ago. These past positions that we currently see are called the retarded positions/delayed view positions.

### 3.1 Relativistic Observers Delayed view

\*\*\* change  $\theta_c$  to  $\alpha$

When looking at moving objects we see them where they were in their past positions, due to the delay in the light signal, so let us talk about the transform showing a source particle emitting a photon to an observer, showing the retarded position the observer sees.

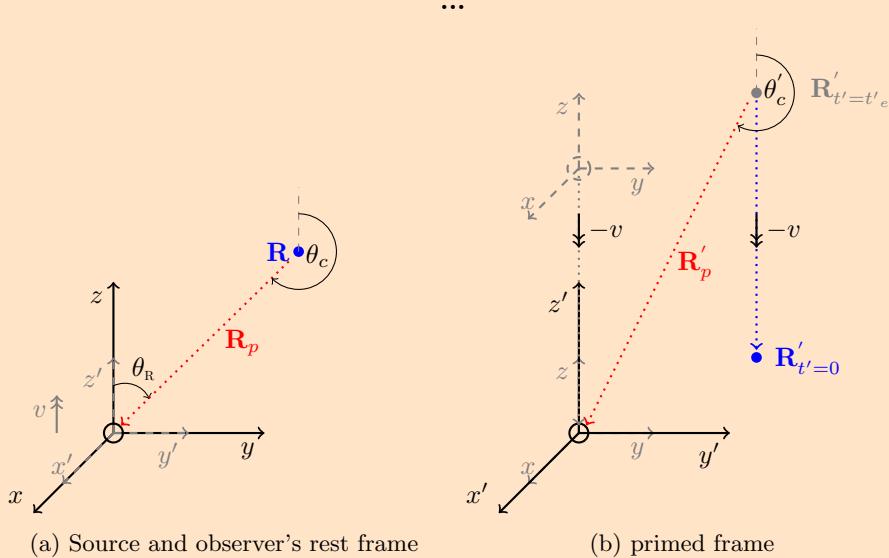


Figure 3.1: Diagram of a source particle (blue) emitting light (red), which is absorbed by an observer positioned at the origin at time  $t = t' = 0$  with the observer and source at rest in the first inertial frame (left) and then shown moving in a primed frame (right).

**system:**

If we take the rest frame of an observer and a particle that emits a pulse of light from its position at  $\mathbf{R}$  so that it is received by the observer at the origin, at time  $t = 0$ .

The time the pulse of light was emitted is  $T_e = -\frac{|\mathbf{R}|}{c}$  (where  $\frac{|\mathbf{R}|}{c}$  is the time it takes light to propagate along  $\mathbf{R}$  to the origin), and the velocity of that light that is propagating towards the origin is

---


$$\mathbf{c} = c \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \sin \theta_c \\ \cos \theta_c \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.1)$$

giving the emitted position as

$$\mathbf{R} = cT_e \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \sin \theta_c \\ \cos \theta_c \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.2)$$

the position vector and light's velocity are in opposite directions which can be seen due to the emitted time being negative. If you wish to have this in terms of the position vector angle from the z-axis you can use the equation for the angles  $\theta_R = \theta_c - \pi$ . Now inputting the delayed positions and times (with origin time  $t = 0$ ) in the first frame into the coordinate transform we get the delayed position in the primed frame as

$$\mathbf{R}' = cT_e \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \sin \theta_c \\ \gamma (\cos \theta_c - \frac{v}{c}) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ R_y \\ \gamma (R_z - vT_e) \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.3)$$

at time

$$t'_e = \gamma(1 - \frac{v}{c} \cos \theta_c)T_e$$

we can see that this does agree with the light's velocity transform as well, as it is in the direct opposite direction to  $\mathbf{R}$  as it should be. With the light being received at the origin of the primed frame axis at time  $t' = 0$ , this is the delayed position, if you wanted to find the position of where the particle actually is, we would need to propagate this to the current time of zero of the observer, given by

---

$$\mathbf{R}'_{t'=0} = \mathbf{R}' - \mathbf{v}t'_e = cT_e \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ \sin \theta_c \\ \frac{1}{\gamma} \cos \theta_c \end{pmatrix} \quad (3.4)$$

### 3.2 Delayed View of Transformed Coordinates

How the delayed view of coordinates is taken into account after a transformation is shown in the figure below.

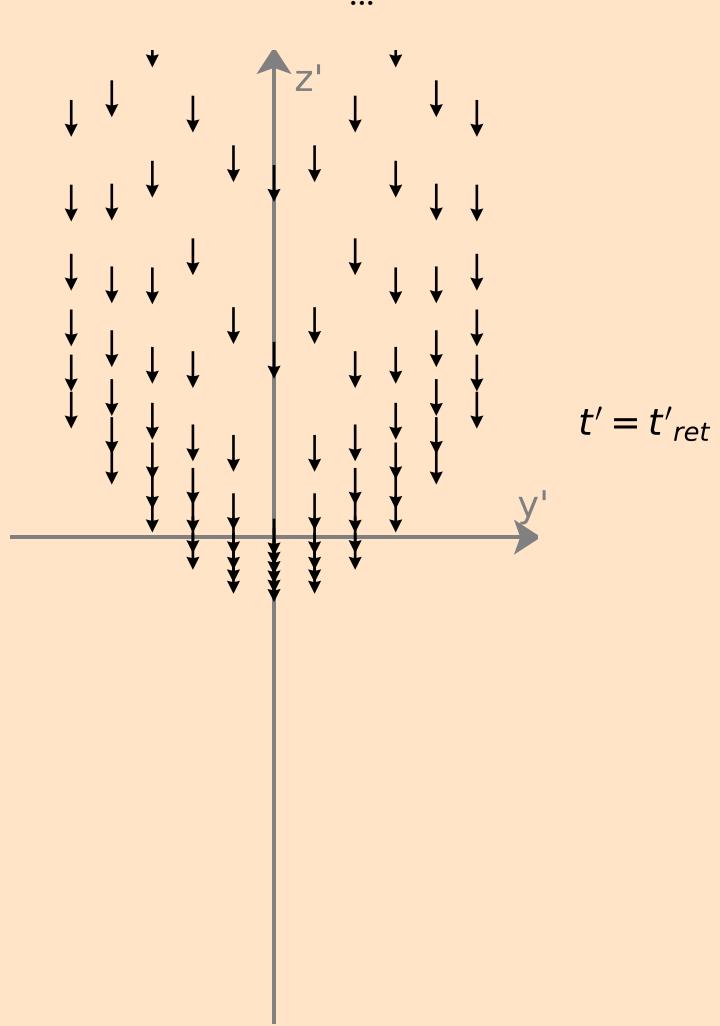


Figure 3.2: A diagram, showing an initial grid of points, representing position coordinates, at time  $t = 0$  that are at rest in their proper frame, with an observer at the origin (left), giving the direct transformation into the moving primed frame (second) where the points are now moving at velocity  $-v = -0.9$  which is in the negative  $z$ -direction with the colors and labels showing the desynchronization of the primed times  $t' = -\gamma \frac{zv}{c^2}$ , the next figure (third) shows what these points would be in the same primed frame when they are synchronized with the origin's time  $t' = 0$ , the last figure (fourth) shows the same primed frame but now with the particles positioned where they would be seen to be at by an observer at the origin with the observers time  $t' = 0$ , these positions are due to the delay in the light from these particles taking time to get to the observer, also known as the retarded positions of the particles.

---

\*\*\* todo: could include the plot of a larger grid of points to show the distribution of delayed view of particles better, or give the heat map of the density of delayed view coordinates

### 3.3 Steps for Changing Frames

This section outlines the steps that should be taken to change between two inertial frames:

Firstly let us talk about going from the retarded coordinates of objects in one frame to a second frame. So if in your initial frame, you have an observer at rest at the origin, and different objects are moving around in this frame, if we take the retarded positions  $\mathbf{R}_{ret}$  of the objects (i.e. as the observer sees them positioned due to the delay in the light from the object), and use the retarded times of these objects which is  $t_{ret} = -\frac{|\mathbf{R}_{ret}|}{c}$  with the coordinate transform, then these retarded positions in the initial reference frame will be transformed to their retarded positions in the second frame at their retarded times within it.

Another option is that you want to go from the object's positions that have times that are synchronized with the observer to positions that are also synced with the observer in the primed frame. Then we need to start with all objects where they currently are at  $t = 0$  then the coordinate transformation transforms the positions to the primed positions in the second frame, but at desynchronized times, so that we will have to propagate these objects forward or back in time until they are all at the time of the observer at the origin which is  $t' = 0$  if the velocities of the objects are constant then you will only need to find their primed velocities, but if the initial frames velocities are not constant this is then a bit trickier, as you will have to worry about the transformations of acceleration to find its position at  $t' = 0$ .

---

### 3.4 Variables

$\alpha : \dots$

$r/\vec{R} : \dots$

$r_p/\vec{R}_p : \dots$

$\theta : \dots$

$T_c : \dots$

$\vec{c} : \dots$

$r_{ret}/\vec{R}_{ret} : \dots$

# Chapter 4

## Spherical light pulses

- Explain that it's not normally included in SR sources, and why it is included here

### 4.1 Spherical Polar Coordinates

This math section is just for reference in later sections,

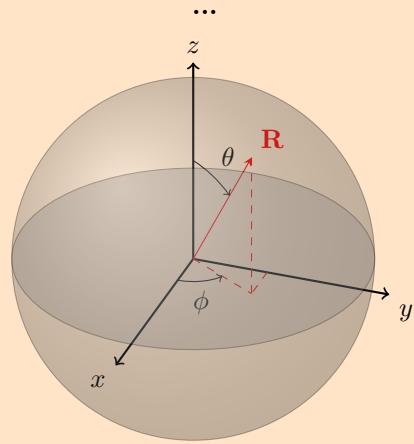


Figure 4.1: Diagram of an axis showing spherical polar coordinates

For a given coordinate  $\mathbf{R}$  we have the Cartesian coordinates  $(x, y, z)$ , but we

---

can also write this in terms of spherical polar coordinates  $(r, \theta, \phi)$  where the angles from the Z-Axis and X-axis respectively are  $\theta$  (between 0 and  $\pi$ ) and  $\phi$  (between 0 and  $2\pi$ ), and  $r$  is the distance to the point from the origin, i.e. the magnitude  $|\mathbf{R}|$ . So that the coordinate can be written as

$$\boxed{\mathbf{R} = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{pmatrix} = r \begin{pmatrix} \cos \phi \sin \theta \\ \sin \phi \sin \theta \\ \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}} \quad (4.1)$$

with  $r = \sqrt{x^2 + y^2 + z^2}$ ,  $\cos \phi = \frac{x}{\sqrt{x^2+y^2}}$ , and  $\cos \theta = \frac{z}{r}$ . Some useful formulae for later are the unit vectors

$$\hat{r} = \begin{pmatrix} \sin \theta \cos \phi \\ \sin \theta \sin \phi \\ \cos \theta \end{pmatrix}, \hat{\theta} = \begin{pmatrix} \cos \theta \cos \phi \\ \cos \theta \sin \phi \\ -\sin \theta \end{pmatrix}, \hat{\phi} = \begin{pmatrix} -\sin \phi \\ \cos \phi \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.2)$$

and the differentials with respect to each of the coordinates are

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial \mathbf{R}}{\partial r} &= \hat{r} \\ \frac{\partial \mathbf{R}}{\partial \theta} &= \begin{pmatrix} r \cos \theta \cos \phi \\ r \cos \theta \sin \phi \\ -r \sin \theta \end{pmatrix} = r \hat{\theta} \\ \frac{\partial \mathbf{R}}{\partial \phi} &= \begin{pmatrix} -r \sin \theta \sin \phi \\ r \sin \theta \cos \phi \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} = r \sin \theta \hat{\phi} \end{aligned} \quad (4.3)$$

## 4.2 Light Speed Velocity Transform

The speed of light remains the same after transforming between frames, but the velocity is not as the direction changes. The velocity transformation in the case where the speed is that of light,  $|u| = c$ , with the direction in the initial frame at an angle  $\alpha$  from the z-axis and  $\varphi$  from the x-axis, so that in spherical polar

coordinates the velocity of light is

$$\mathbf{c} = c \begin{pmatrix} \cos \varphi \sin \alpha \\ \sin \varphi \sin \alpha \\ \cos \alpha \end{pmatrix}, \quad (4.4)$$

then from the velocity transform in eq. (2.40) we get

$$\mathbf{c}' = \frac{c}{\gamma(1 - \frac{v}{c} \cos \alpha)} \begin{pmatrix} \sin \alpha \cos \varphi \\ \sin \alpha \sin \varphi \\ \gamma(\cos \alpha - \frac{v}{c}) \end{pmatrix}$$

at position  $\mathbf{R}'$  and time  $t'$

(4.5)

This still has the same speed of light which can be shown by taking the magnitude of the velocity vector (i.e. the square root of the squares of all its elements). However, the angle of propagation has been changed.

### 4.3 Doppler Effect



Figure 4.2: Diagrams of Light being emitted by a source in two different frames.

In the rest frame of a source  $s$ , if it emits a wave at the speed of light in any direction, we have the length the wave has traveled from the source in the time  $d\tau$  as being

$$d\lambda = cd\tau \quad (4.6)$$

If we change to a frame where the source is now moving at speed  $u'_s$  in the z-direction and we have the wave now emitted at an angle  $\alpha'$  from the z-axis, trav-

---

eling distance  $cdt'$  in a time  $dt'$ , with the particle moving a distance  $u_s' \cos \alpha' dt'$  in the direction of this emitted part of the wave, this leads to a bunching up of the wave in the direction of the movement of the particle, as the same amount of the wave has been emitted in this primed time, but the distance it has traveled from source is

$$d\lambda' = cdt' - u_s' \cos \alpha' dt' = (1 - \frac{u_s'}{c} \cos \alpha')cdt' \quad (4.7)$$

we have  $dt' = \gamma d\tau$ , so the ratio of space the wave takes up in that direction compared to in the rest frame is

$$Ratio = \frac{d\lambda'}{d\lambda} = \gamma \left( 1 - \frac{u_s'}{c} \cos \alpha' \right) \quad (4.8)$$

since wavelength is inversely proportional to the frequency, and this bunching up at the front will proportionally decrease the wavelength

$$\Phi_r = \frac{1}{\gamma \left( 1 - \frac{u_s'}{c} \cos \alpha' \right)} \quad (4.9)$$

#### 4.4 Aberration in Special Relativity

The propagation directions of the light as seen in Figure (4.3), are transformed such that the angles between them and the Z-Axis, have the aberrational relationship

$$\cos \alpha' = \frac{\mathbf{c}_z'}{\|\mathbf{c}'\|} = \frac{\cos \alpha + \frac{u_s'}{c}}{1 + \frac{u_s'}{c} \cos \alpha}. \quad (4.10)$$

This is the relativistic aberration formula [2], it shows how the field's propagation direction transforms. Figure (4.4) shows what would happen in the case of incoming light from all directions.

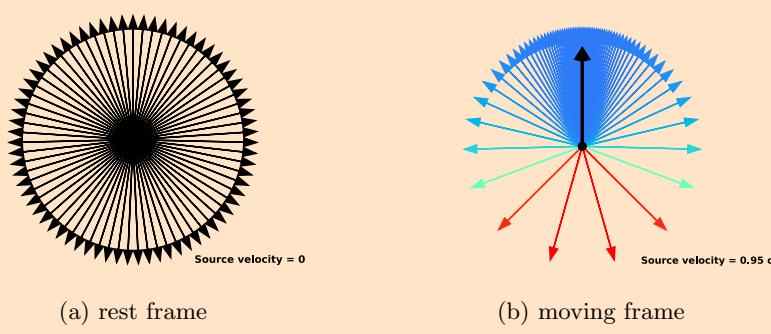


Figure 4.3: Diagram showing the directions of propagation of an evenly distributed light pulse in the rest frame of a source and the corresponding distribution in a frame in which the source is now moving, with the colors showing the Doppler effect on the light's frequency.

It can be seen from eq. (4.10) that as a source's speed tends to the speed of light,  $\cos \alpha'$  tends to 1 as the top and bottom of the fraction cancel each other out, hence all emitted or absorbed light in the source's rest frame tends to the direction of the source's movement. But we also have to remember that if there was any time between the start and finishing of the emitting the light, this time would tend to infinity as well, basically any emitted light would remain in the vicinity of the source.

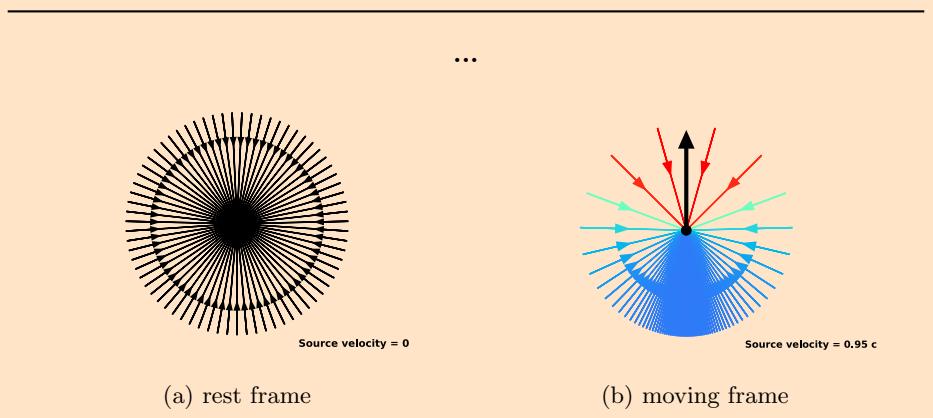


Figure 4.4: Diagram showing the directions of evenly distributed light being absorbed by a particle in its rest frame and the corresponding distribution in a frame in which the particle is now moving, with the colors showing the Doppler effect on the light's frequency.

## 4.5 Transform of Light Pulse from Origin

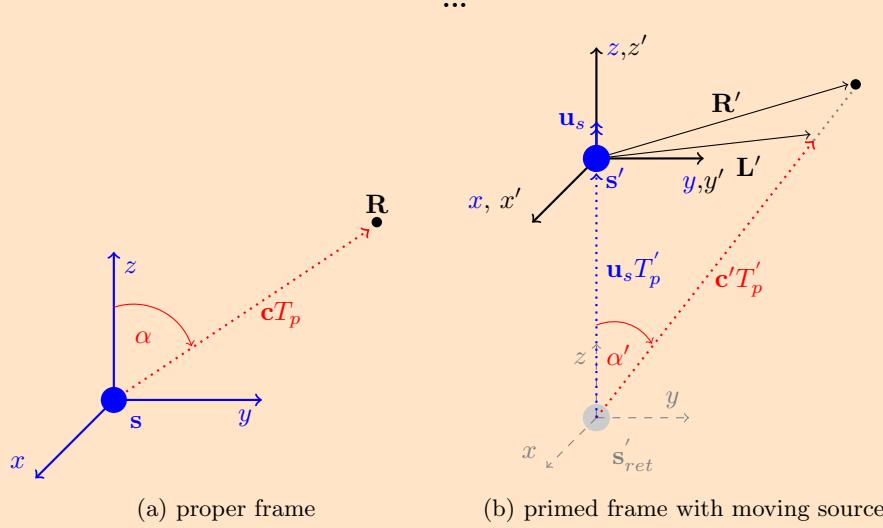


Figure 4.5: The diagram shows a source particle  $s$  in blue at rest in the proper frame, Fig (a), with a light pulse that has propagated along  $\mathbf{c}T_p$  shown in red, at an angle  $\alpha$  from the  $z$ -axis, to coordinate  $\mathbf{R}$  shown in black, with the current time for whole system being  $t = 0$ . Fig (b), shows the system transformed to a primed frame moving at velocity  $\mathbf{v} = (0, 0, v)$  in the  $z$ -direction relative to the proper frame, such that the particle and its attached proper axis in this frame are moving at velocity  $\mathbf{u}_s = -\mathbf{v}$  and is currently at the primed origin with time  $t' = 0$ . when the light was emitted from the particle, the particle and attached proper axis were at the retarded position  $\mathbf{s}'_{ret}$  shown in grey, the emitted light was then propagated at an angle  $\alpha'$  from the  $z$ -axis, along  $\mathbf{c}'T'_p$  to reach  $\mathbf{L}'$  at  $t' = 0$ . it has not yet reached the corresponding Lorentz transformed coordinate  $\mathbf{R}'$ .

As visualized in figure (4.5). If we have a light source particle  $s$ , in its rest frame that had emitted a pulse of light in one direction such that it propagates along  $\mathbf{c}T_p$  at an angle  $\alpha$  from the  $z$ -axis and is currently at position  $\mathbf{R}$  at time  $t = 0$ , where  $\mathbf{c}$  is the velocity of light and  $T_p$  is the time it took to propagate to  $\mathbf{R}$ . Using the coordinated transform from eq. (2.33) on  $\mathbf{R}$  with  $t = 0$  we get

---


$$\mathbf{R}' = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \\ \gamma z \end{pmatrix}, \quad (4.11)$$

at time

$$t' = -\gamma \frac{vz}{c^2}$$

the light pulse's velocity using the velocity transform from eq. (4.5) in Cartesian coordinates and particles speed in the primed frame with  $v = -u_s$  is

$$\mathbf{c}' = \frac{c}{\gamma \left( 1 + \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \frac{u_s}{c} \right)} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{x}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \frac{y}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \gamma \left( \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} + \frac{u_s}{c} \right) \end{pmatrix} \quad (4.12)$$

The time that the particle emits the light in the proper frame is  $T_{ret} = -T_p$  which corresponds to the contracted time

$$t'_{ret} = \gamma T_{ret} = -\gamma T_p \quad (4.13)$$

So that in the primed frame, the retarded position of the source particle emits the light pulse is

$$\mathbf{s}'_{ret} = -\gamma T_p \mathbf{u}_s \quad (4.14)$$

to find the position the light pulse is currently at, at time  $t' = 0$ , we have to rewind its time from the position  $\mathbf{R}'$  that it is at when using the Lorentz transform at time  $t' = -\gamma \frac{vz}{c^2} = \gamma \frac{u_s z}{c^2}$  taking away the displacement it propagated in this time to get the current position of the light to be ( $t'_p = -t'_{ret}$ ).

---

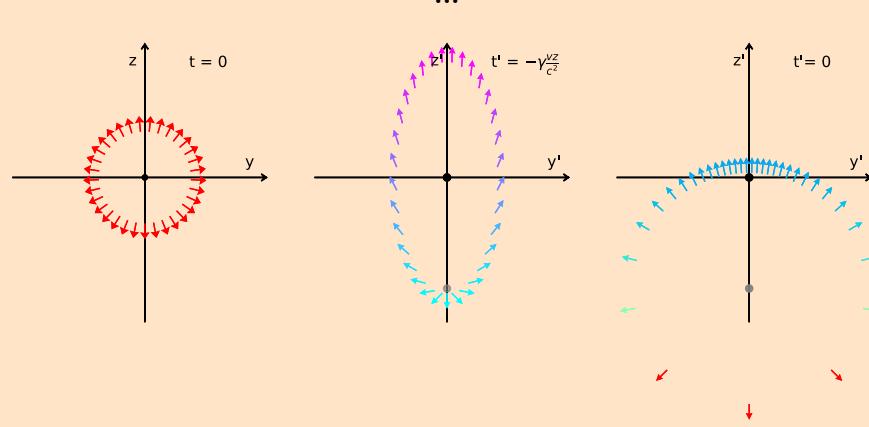

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{L}' &= \mathbf{s}_{ret}^{'} + \mathbf{c}' t' p \\
&= (\mathbf{c}' - \mathbf{u}_s) t' p \\
&= \frac{ct' p}{\gamma \left( 1 + \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \frac{u_s}{c} \right)} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{x}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \frac{y}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \gamma \left( \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} + \frac{u_s}{c} \right) \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ u_s t' p \end{pmatrix} \\
&= \frac{ct' p}{\gamma \left( 1 + \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \frac{u_s}{c} \right)} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{x}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \frac{y}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \gamma \left( \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} + \frac{u_s}{c} \right) - \gamma \left( 1 + \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \frac{u_s}{c} \right) \frac{u_s}{c} \end{pmatrix}
\end{aligned} \tag{4.15}$$

which leads to

$$\mathbf{L}' = \frac{ct' p}{\gamma \left( 1 + \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \frac{u_s}{c} \right)} \begin{pmatrix} \frac{x}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \frac{y}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \\ \frac{1}{\gamma} \frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} \end{pmatrix} \tag{4.16}$$

## 4.6 Relativistic Beaming

The previous section can be used to show us what happens to the angles of propagation in a spherical pulse of light with evenly distributed angles. Substituting  $\frac{x}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} = \cos \varphi \sin \alpha$ ,  $\frac{y}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} = \sin \varphi \sin \alpha$  and  $\frac{z}{\|\mathbf{R}\|} = \cos \alpha$  for spherical polar coordinates, which leads to



(a) Source's Rest Frame (b) Source's Moving frame (c) Source's Moving frame

Figure 4.6: Diagram showing, the position of light pulse after a certain amount of time, first in the rest frame and next in the primed frame, the direct coordinate transform gives the ellipsoid with coordinates having different times, and the circular pulse in the primed frame is when you account for this and propagate each part of the pulse, to back or forward in time so that each part has the same time as the origin. \*\*\* could have the proper axis with different colors

If we then did the same for multiple pulses to see how they transform, noting that the time between each pulse is the dilated time in the primed frame.

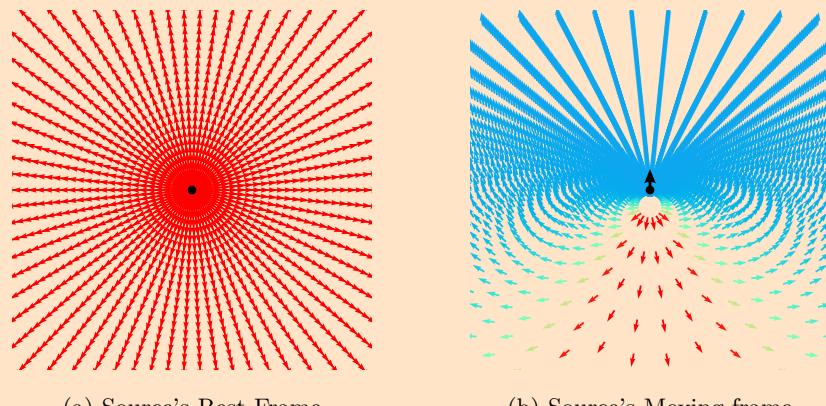


Figure 4.7: A 2D diagram showing multiple spherically symmetrical pulses of light from a source at rest (left), and in a corresponding primed inertial frame where the source is moving (right), the colors show the Doppler effect on lights light \*\*\* describe it as spherical waves with them being closer together in the direction of movement, could have separate diagram showing the concentric circles with different origins

## 4.7 Variables

$\phi : \dots$

$\hat{r} : \dots$

$\hat{\theta} : \dots$

$\hat{\phi} : \dots$

$d\lambda : \dots$

$\Phi_r : \dots$

$u'_s/u_s : \dots$  i use these interchangeably...

$\vec{L}' : \dots$

$\vec{s}, \vec{s}' : \dots$

$T_p : \dots$

$\vec{s}'_{ret} : \dots$

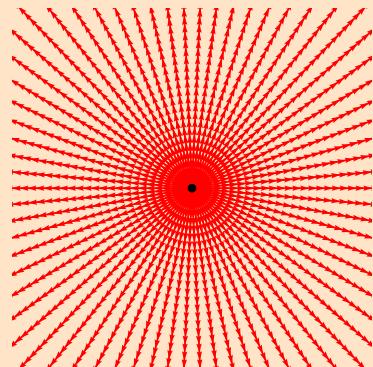
$T_{ret} : \dots$

## Chapter 5

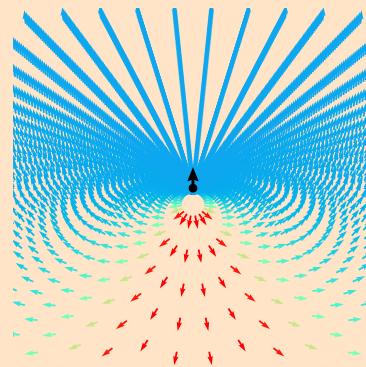
# A Moving Source's Field

- Explain that it's not normally included in SR sources, and why it is included here

...



(a) Source's Rest Frame



(b) Source's Moving frame

Figure 5.1: A 2D diagram showing multiple spherically symmetrical pulses of light from a source at rest (left), and in a corresponding primed inertial frame where the source is moving (right), the colors show the Doppler effect on lights light \*\*\* describe it as spherical waves with them being closer together in the direction of movement, could have separate diagram showing the concentric circles with different origins

\*\*\* What is the change in the rate of change of direction at a coordinate of the light  $\frac{d\alpha(y',z',t')}{dt'}$  (maybe try  $\frac{d\cos\alpha(y',z',t')}{dt'}$  and  $\frac{d\sin\alpha(y',z',t')}{dt'}$  instead) and find

---

at  $t' = 0$  what is the change in the angle with change in position  $\frac{d\alpha(y', z', t')}{dy'}$ ,  $\frac{d\alpha(y', z', t')}{dz'}$  and  $\frac{d^2\alpha(y', z', t')}{dy'dz'}$

\*\*\* What is the density of the field at a certain point, using  $k \frac{1}{R^2}$  in a proper frame, and then taking into account the distance from coordinate to retarded position of the source and then the aberration and Doppler effect

## 5.1 Flux from Point Source

\*\*\* - Add more meaning to Flux section

-flux describes the rate at which a quantity flows across a surface (flowrate per unit area)

### 5.1.1 Surface element

#### Differential Element in Spherical Polar Coordinates

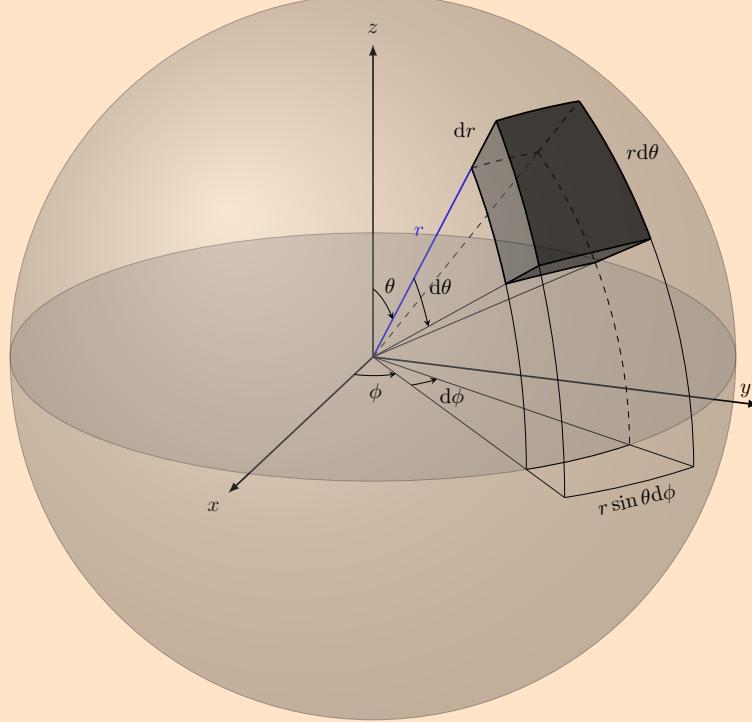


Figure 5.2: ...

The surface element spanning from  $\theta$  to  $\theta + d\theta$  and  $\phi$  to  $\phi + d\phi$  on a spherical surface at (constant) radius  $r$  is then

$$dS = \left\| \frac{\partial \mathbf{R}}{\partial \theta} \times \frac{\partial \mathbf{R}}{\partial \phi} \right\| d\theta d\phi = \left| r\hat{\theta} \times r \sin \theta \hat{\phi} \right| = r^2 \sin \theta d\theta d\phi \quad (5.1)$$

The differential solid angle is

$$d\Omega = \frac{dS}{r^2} = \sin \theta d\theta d\phi \quad (5.2)$$

A solid angle  $\Omega$  is a measure of the amount of the field of view from some particular point that a given object covers. The fraction of the field of view covered from a point is given by  $\Omega/4\pi$

---

### 5.1.2 Field Flux

A proper frame of a particle's differential solid angle element (definition given in previous chapter (maybe move that subsection to here))

$$d\Omega = \sin \theta d\theta d\phi, \quad (5.3)$$

encompasses a certain amount of the wavefront, this is the same amount of the wavefront that is encompassed by the coinciding aberrated differential solid angle

$$d\Omega' = \sin \theta' d\theta' d\phi'. \quad (5.4)$$

We can calculate this element by differentiating both sides of eq. (4.10) with respect to  $\theta$  [3], which gives

$$\sin \theta' d\theta' = \frac{1 - \frac{u_s^2}{c^2}}{\left(1 + \frac{u_s}{c} \cos \theta\right)^2} \sin \theta d\theta = \frac{1}{\gamma^2 \left(1 + \frac{u_s}{c} \cos \theta\right)^2} \sin \theta d\theta \quad (5.5)$$

as  $v = -u_s$  now using this and  $d\phi' = d\phi$  (as the angle  $\phi$  is always perpendicular to the motion of the particle and hence unaffected by transformation ) we have the solid angle in the primed frame given as

$$d\Omega' = \frac{1}{\gamma^2 \left(1 + \frac{u_s}{c} \cos \theta\right)^2} \sin \theta d\theta d\phi. \quad (5.6)$$

The relative primed wavefront strength at a given angle is taken as being proportional to the amount of the wavefront per solid angle in the primed frame relative to that in the proper frame, referred to here as the aberrational wavefront strength weighting, given as

$$\Phi_\Omega = \frac{d\Omega}{d\Omega'} = \text{\AA}^2. \quad (5.7)$$

---

(define what I mean by strength weighting)

\*\*\* This flux does not take into account that the source keeps changing position, so at a change  $ds$  from position field is coming from a different retarded position of the source, so there is a rotation of direction and a different flux, there is gradients and rotations

\*\*\* This flux transform is the change in flux in the emitted direction from the source only not what another particle would feel

## 5.2 Variables

$dS$  : ... surface element might be confusing to have as an S

$d\Omega$  : ...

$\phi_\Omega$  : ...

$\hat{A}$  : ...

## Chapter 6

# Invariant Quantities

Quantities that are frame-independent, i.e. do not change when we transform between inertial reference frames, are called Lorentz invariant.

In this chapter, we will see the invariant quantity related to space-time coordinates and use this to find invariant properties associated with velocity, which will lead to the more abstract conservation relation of momentum energy and mass. We will find a new quantity with the units of energy that has a term which approximates to the kinetic energy of a particle at low velocities and another term that suggests particles have a new type of energy, that was not previously in classical physics, that depends on the mass of a particle (mass-energy equivalence), this will all lead to a new conservation law of energy. The reason we care about the concept of energy is that it has a conservation relation that can be used as a tool to help us make calculations and model more complex systems.

### 6.1 Space-Time Interval

\*\*\* maybe explain the interval on a complex triangle instead with it being the hypotenuse and sides being  $c t_i$  and  $r$

We define a quantity called the space-time interval  $\Delta S$  between two events in a generic inertial reference frame as:

---

$$\Delta S^2 = (c\Delta t)^2 - \Delta x^2 - \Delta y^2 - \Delta z^2$$

(6.1)

All inertial frames of reference agree on this interval as it is invariant between frames, as  $\Delta S = \Delta S'$ , which can be shown when we sub the values from equation (2.35) into the primed version of this last equation

$$\begin{aligned}
 \Delta S'^2 &= (c\Delta t')^2 - \Delta x'^2 - \Delta y'^2 - \Delta z'^2 \\
 &= c^2 \gamma \left( \Delta t - \frac{v}{c^2} \Delta z \right)^2 - \Delta x^2 - \Delta y^2 - \Delta (\gamma(\Delta z - v\Delta t))^2 \\
 &= (c\Delta t)^2 - \Delta x^2 - \Delta y^2 - \Delta z^2 \\
 &= \Delta S^2.
 \end{aligned} \tag{6.2}$$

## 6.2 Energy-Momentum Relation

From here forward we will be making some jumps in logic and assertions, leading to claims of what we will call the total energy and rest mass energy, but I will try to give as much reasoning as I can for these choices in assertions.

\*\*\* Quantum mechanics may help with reasoning for parts of the energy-momentum reasoning

We can see from the previous section that if a particle is moving in a particular inertial reference frame, we can define the space-time interval of its coordinates in this frame as

$$\Delta S_p^2 = (c\Delta t_p)^2 - \Delta x_p^2 - \Delta y_p^2 - \Delta z_p^2 \tag{6.3}$$

and if we divide by the square of the proper time that passes for the particle in this interval  $\Delta\tau$ , so that now taking the limit as the change in time in the interval goes to zero, we get an abstract invariant quantity that we will call the space-time velocity

---


$$\begin{aligned}
\left(\frac{dS_p}{d\tau}\right)^2 &= \left(c \frac{dt_p}{d\tau}\right)^2 - \left(c \frac{dx_p}{d\tau}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{dy_p}{d\tau}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{dz_p}{d\tau}\right)^2 \\
&= c^2 \gamma_u^2 \left(1 - \frac{u_x^2 + u_y^2 + u_z^2}{c^2}\right) = c^2 \gamma_u^2 \left(1 - \frac{u^2}{c^2}\right) \\
&= c^2
\end{aligned} \tag{6.4}$$

It can be seen that this is still an invariant quantity as the speed of light is constant in all frames. Now by multiplying both sides by  $c^2$  and the square of the rest mass  $m$  of the particle we have the square of an invariant quantity with the units of energy, that is equal to  $mc^2$  and give the equation to be

$$\begin{aligned}
m^2 c^2 \left(\frac{dS_p}{d\tau}\right)^2 &= \gamma_u^2 m^2 c^4 - \gamma_u^2 m^2 (u_x^2 + u_y^2 + u_z^2) c^2 \\
(mc^2)^2 &= \gamma_u^2 m^2 c^4 - \gamma_u^2 m^2 u^2 c^2
\end{aligned} \tag{6.5}$$

rearranging, we get

$$(\gamma_u mc^2)^2 = (mc^2)^2 + (\gamma_u muc)^2 \tag{6.6}$$

using the Taylor expansion of  $\gamma_u$  on the quantity  $\gamma_u mc^2$ , we have for the squared term on the lefthand side

$$\begin{aligned}
\gamma_u mc^2 &= mc^2 \left(1 + \frac{1}{2} \frac{u^2}{c^2} + \frac{3}{8} \frac{u^4}{c^4} + \dots\right) \\
&= mc^2 + \frac{1}{2} mu^2 + \frac{3}{8} m \frac{u^4}{c^2} + \dots
\end{aligned} \tag{6.7}$$

This equation's first quantity is an energy that does not depend on the speed of the particle, and only on its rest mass, we shall call this the rest mass energy, and this can be taken as a new type of energy all masses have even when at rest. The second quantity is the classical kinetic energy formula, the rest may be seen as higher-order kinetic energy terms that are very small for  $u \ll c$ , so this seems to be a formula for the total energy of a particle in the absence of a potential field (i.e. no change in potential energy) with added terms which become non-negligible at larger particle speeds, we will denote this total energy

---

E. Taking this assertion we have

$$E^2 = (mc^2)^2 + (\gamma_u mu)^2 c^2 \quad (6.8)$$

so this total energy is equal to its rest energy squared plus a second energy squared that depends on its speed, this second quantity along with the Taylor expansion of  $\gamma_u$  gives

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma_u muc &= muc \left( 1 + \frac{1}{2} \frac{u^2}{c^2} + \frac{3}{8} \frac{u^4}{c^4} + \dots \right) \\ &= c \left( mu + \frac{1}{2} m \frac{u^3}{c^2} + \frac{3}{8} m \frac{u^5}{c^4} + \dots \right) \end{aligned} \quad (6.9)$$

which at small particle velocities is approximately  $muc$  with  $mu$  being the classical momentum, we could assert that this whole energy is momentum in the relativistic context, i.e.

$$p = \gamma_u mu \quad (6.10)$$

as it has the same units and is approximately the classical momentum at small particle speeds.

$$E_0 = mc^2 \quad (6.11)$$

This is the energy it has from its rest mass, if a particle at rest was to decay into photons, the photons emitted from this would be equal to this energy. The final energy-momentum equation is then given as

$$E^2 = E_0^2 + (pc)^2 \quad (6.12)$$

\*\*\* Outside the scope of SR, should we state that the mass is a measure of its energy content instead?

---

## 6.3 Energy-Momentum Relation For Photons

\*\*\* First associate the energy of photon  $E = hf$  then find its equivalence in mass, then sub this in, and then say momentum for the photon is then  $hf/c$ . For a Photon we have the mass equal to zero and the momentum as  $p_{light} = \frac{hf}{c}$  which is taken from quantum mechanics and the energy-momentum relation as

$$E = cp_{light} = hf \quad (6.13)$$

where  $h$  is Planks constant and  $f$  is the frequency of the light.

nothing is derived here, just states what to do for a photon

### 6.3.1 Energy-Mass Equivalence

\*\*\* Imagine we have a particle at rest emitting light in all directions so that afterward it is still at rest, but in another frame we have this particle moving and the emitted light aberrated, but we still need the particle to remain at a constant velocity after emission. (maybe include a rotation in the impulse/effect of light in each direction on the particle of has)

\*\*\*-if we have a ball in its rest frame that emits a flash of light evenly in all directions, we will have the ball's energy decrease by the amount of energy of the emitted light, and it will remain at rest after due to the light being emitted evenly in all directions -its kinetic energy is zero in this frame

## 6.4 Variables

$\Delta S : \dots$

$dS_p : \dots$

$\delta S_p : \dots$

$dS_p : \dots$

$x_p, y_p, z_p, t_p : \dots$

$\delta x_p, \delta y_p, \delta z_p, \delta t_p : \dots$

---

$\delta\tau$  : ...

$m$  : ...

$\gamma_u$  : ...

$E$  : ...

$E_0$  : ...

$p$  : ...

$h$  : ...

$f$  : ...

$p_{light}$  : ...

...

# Outro

meaningful conclusion:

- [ ] summarise the key points that were discussed in the book - [ ] discuss implications and applications of these points - [ ] propose areas of expansion for this topic/ future research - [ ] what the reader can do next to expand knowledge (i.e. internal and external resources)

\*\*\* this was meant as an introduction to physical concepts and mathematical tools \*\*\* What was left out of this book \*\*\* Things still to be added to this book \*\*\* Questions you may have \*\*\* General confusions \*\*\*

# Resources

# Bibliography

- [1] Morley Williams Michelson Abraham. “On the Relative Motion of the Earth and the Luminiferous Ether”. In: *American Journal of Science* 34 (1887).
- [2] Albert Einstein et al. “On the electrodynamics of moving bodies”. In: *Annalen der physik* 17.10 (1905), pp. 891–921.
- [3] David W Hogg. “Special relativity”. In: *Lecture Notes* (1997), pp. 39–40.