The Determinant

Textbook: Sections 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3

Observation (3.1.6)

When is a 2×2 matrix $A = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$ invertible?

Definition

We define the determinant funtion $\mathrm{Mat}_2(\mathbb{R}) \xrightarrow{det} \mathbb{R}$ to be $det \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix} = ad - bc$

Remark

1. As we observed above, a 2×2 matrix is invertible if and only if $det(A) \neq 0$.
2. It is helpful to think about $A = [\ \vec{x} \ \ \vec{y}\ ]$ to to consist of column vectors $\vec{x}, \vec{y} \in \mathbb{R}^2$.

Proposition (3.1.1)

The are of the parallelogram spanned by vectors $\vec{x}$ and $\vec{y}$ in $\mathbb{R}^2$ is equal to the determinant of the matrix $A = [\ \vec{x} \ \ \vec{y}\ ]$.

From this it is clear that the area is nonzero
if and only if the vectors spanning the parallelogram
are linearly independent, that is, not parallel.

Observation

Let $A = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$ be a 2×2 matrix and denote its columns as $\vec{x} = \begin{pmatrix} a \\ c \end{pmatrix}$ and $\vec{y} = \begin{pmatrix} b \\ d \end{pmatrix}$.

We can think of A as the matrix of a linear transformation

$$\mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}^2$$

sending

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} a \\ c \end{pmatrix}$$
$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} b \\ d \end{pmatrix}$$

Discussion

Compute the determinant, draw the parallelogram and decide if the corresponding transformation is invertible for the following matrices.

1.
$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 \\ 3 & -4 \end{pmatrix}$$

2.
$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 4 & 2 \\ -2 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

Remark

1. Let again $A = [\ \vec{x} \ \ \vec{y}]$ be a 2×2 matrix with columns $\vec{x}$ and $\vec{y}$. The determinant function as a funtion of the columns $det(\vec{x}, \vec{y})$ has the following properties
   (a) linear in both arguments

   (b) alternating

   (c) normalized

2. The book calls this the area function $Area(\vec{x}, \vec{y})$ of the vectors spanning the parallelogram.

Proposition (3.1.4)

The determinant funtion is the unique funtion satisfying all properties above.

Proof. In the book ■

Discussion

Can you show that

$$det([\ \vec{x} \ \ \vec{y}\ ]) = 0$$

if $\{\vec{x}, \vec{y}\}$ is linearly dependent by only using the properties above?

Determinant of n x n matrix

Textbook: Sections 3.2

Goal

Generalize the det function to all $n \times n$ matrices as a function of n vectors $\vec{x}_1, \dots, \vec{x}_n$ with an equivalent set of properties.

1. multilinear

2. alternating

3. normalized

Definition

Let $A \in \mathrm{Mat}_n(\mathbb{R})$ be a $n \times n$ matrix. Define the ij-minor A_{ij} to be the $(n-1) \times (n-1)$ matrix obtained by deleting the i-th row and jth column.

Discussion

Compute for the matrix $A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \\ 7 & 8 & 9 \end{pmatrix}$ the minor $A_{23}/$

Proposition (3.2.5, 3.2.6)

There exists a unique multilinear and alternating function f on the columns of 3×3 matrices that is normalized such that $f(I_n) = 1$.

Definition (3.2.7)

We define the determinant of a 3×3 matrix to be this unique function.

$$det(A) = a_{11}det(A_{11}) - a_{12}det(A_{12}) + a_{13}det(A_{13})$$

Discussion

Compute the determinant of the matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \\ 0 & 3 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$$

Remarks

1. The formula through which we defined the determinant function is called the *cofactor expansion.*
2. It is also common to call
$$a_{ij}det(A_{ij})$$
the ij-cofactor of a matrix A.
3. There is nothing special about the first row, we can expand the $det(A)$ along any row or column.

Example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \\ 0 & 3 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$$