A First Course in

LINEAR ALGEBRA

Lecture Notes

for Math 1503

$\mathbb{R}^n$: The Dot Product

A First Course in Linear Algebra

Lecture Slides

These lecture slides were originally developed by Karen Seyffarth of the University of Calgary. Edits, additions, and revisions have been made to these notes by the editorial team at Lyryx Learning to accompany their text A First Course in Linear Algebra based on K. Kuttler's original text.

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The Dot Product

Definition

Let $\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ y_1 \\ z_1 \end{bmatrix}$ and $\vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} x_2 \\ y_2 \\ z_2 \end{bmatrix}$ be vectors in $\mathbb{R}^3$. The dot product of $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ is

$$\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = x_1 x_2 + y_1 y_2 + z_1 z_2,$$

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i.e., $\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}$ is a scalar.

Problem

Find $\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}$ for $\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix}^T, \vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 \end{bmatrix}^T$.

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Solution

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} &= (1)(0) + (2)(1) + (0)(2) + (-1)(3) \\ &= 0 + 2 + 0 + -3 = -1 \end{aligned}$$

Note

If

$$\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} u_1 \\ u_2 \\ \vdots \\ u_n \end{bmatrix}, \text{ and } \vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \\ \vdots \\ v_n \end{bmatrix}$$

are in $\mathbb{R}^n$, then another way to think about the dot product $\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}$ is as the 1×1 matrix

$$\vec{u}^T \vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} u_1 & u_2 & \cdots & u_n \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \\ \vdots \\ v_n \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} u_1v_1 + u_2v_2 + \cdots + u_nv_n \end{bmatrix}$$

which is treated as a scalar given by $u_1v_1 + u_2v_2 + \cdots + u_nv_n$

Properties of the Dot Product

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5. $(k\vec{u}) \bullet \vec{v} = k(\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}) = \vec{u} \bullet (k\vec{v})$
6. $\vec{u} \bullet (\vec{v} + \vec{w}) = \vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} + \vec{u} \bullet \vec{w}$
   $\vec{u} \bullet (\vec{v} - \vec{w}) = \vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} - \vec{u} \bullet \vec{w}$

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Since, for $\vec{u} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, $\vec{u} \bullet \vec{u} = \|\vec{u}\|^2$, we have an alternate (but equivalent) expression for the length of $\vec{u}$:

$$\|\vec{u}\| = \sqrt{\vec{u} \bullet \vec{u}}.$$

Length of a Vector

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Solution

By the properties of the dot product, $\|\vec{u}\|^2 = \vec{u} \bullet \vec{u}$.

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{u} \bullet \vec{u} &= (1)(1) + (3)(3) + (5)(5) + (2)(2) \\ &= 1 + 9 + 25 + 4 \\ &= 39 \end{aligned}$$

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Therefore, $\|\vec{u}\| = \sqrt{\vec{u} \bullet \vec{u}} = \sqrt{39}$

Two Important Inequalities

Theorem

The **Cauchy-Schwarz Inequality** is given as follows. For $\vec{u}, \vec{v} \in \mathbb{R}^n$,

$$|\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}| \leq \|\vec{u}\| \|\vec{v}\|$$

Equality is obtained if one vector is a scalar multiple of the other.

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Equality is obtained if one vector is a scalar multiple of the other.

Theorem

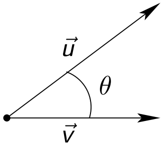
The **Triangle Inequality** is given as follows. For $\vec{u}, \vec{v} \in \mathbb{R}^n$,

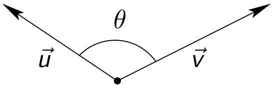
$$\|\vec{u} + \vec{v}\| \leq \|\vec{u}\| + \|\vec{v}\|$$

Equality is obtained if one vector is a non-negative scalar multiple of the other.

The Included Angle

Let $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ be two vectors in $\mathbb{R}^n$ ($n \geq 2$), positioned so they have the same tail. Then there is a unique angle θ between $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ with $0 \leq \theta \leq \pi$. This angle θ is called the included angle.





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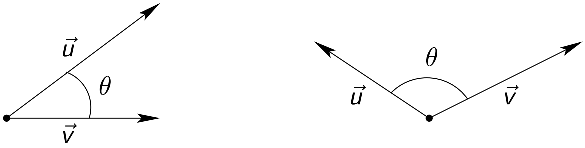

Theorem

Let $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ be nonzero vectors, and let θ denote the angle between $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$. Then

$$\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = \|\vec{u}\| \; \|\vec{v}\| \cos\theta.$$

Finding the included angle for nonzero vectors

As a consequence of the Theorem, if $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ are nonzero vectors with included angle θ, then $\|\vec{u}\| \neq 0$ and $\|\vec{v}\| \neq 0$,
and
$$\cos\theta = \frac{\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}}{\|\vec{u}\|\|\vec{v}\|}.$$

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Included Angle

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Solution

$\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = 1$, $\|\vec{u}\| = \sqrt{2}$ and $\|\vec{v}\| = \sqrt{2}$.
Therefore,

$$\cos\theta = \frac{\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}}{\|\vec{u}\| \ \|\vec{v}\|} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}\sqrt{2}} = \frac{1}{2}.$$

Since $0 \leq \theta \leq \pi$, $\theta = \frac{\pi}{3}$.

Therefore, the angle between $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ is $\frac{\pi}{3}$.

Problem

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$$\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = -9, \ \|\vec{u}\| = \sqrt{54}$$

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Let θ denote the included angle for $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$.

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Since $0 \leq \theta \leq \pi$, the included angle is $\theta = \frac{2\pi}{3}$.

Problem

Find the included angle for $\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} 7 \\ -1 \\ 3 \end{bmatrix}$ and $\vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 4 \\ -1 \end{bmatrix}$.

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Let θ denote included angle.

$$\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} =$$

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$$\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = 0.$$

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Regardless of $\|\vec{u}\|$ and $\|\vec{v}\|$, $\cos\theta = 0$,

Problem

Find the included angle for $\vec{u} = \left[\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ -1 \\ 3 \end{array}\right]$ and $\vec{v} = \left[\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 4 \\ -1 \end{array}\right]$.

Solution

Let θ denote included angle.

$$\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = 0.$$

Regardless of $\|\vec{u}\|$ and $\|\vec{v}\|$, $\cos\theta = 0$, and therefore the included angle is $\theta = \frac{\pi}{2}$.

Orthogonal Vectors

Definition

Vectors $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ are orthogonal, also called perpendicular, if and only if $\vec{u} = \vec{0}$ or $\vec{v} = \vec{0}$ or $\theta = \frac{\pi}{2}$.

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Nonzero vectors $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$ are orthogonal if and only if $\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = 0$.

Proof

We have $\vec{u} \perp \vec{v}$ if and only if $\|\vec{u} - \vec{v}\| = \|\vec{u} + \vec{v}\|$ (see the picture).
This is equivalent to

$$(\vec{u} - \vec{v}) \bullet (\vec{u} - \vec{v}) = (\vec{u} + \vec{v}) \bullet (\vec{u} + \vec{v})$$

which gives $-2\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = 2\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v}$ and therefore $\vec{u} \bullet \vec{v} = 0$.

Problem

Find all vectors $\vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{bmatrix}$ orthogonal to both $\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ -3 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}$ and $\vec{w} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$

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Solution

There are infinitely many such vectors.
Since $\vec{v}$ is orthogonal to both $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{w}$,

$$\begin{aligned} \vec{v} \bullet \vec{u} &= -x - 3y + 2z = 0 \\ \vec{v} \bullet \vec{w} &= y + z = 0 \end{aligned}$$

Solution (continued)

This is a homogeneous system of two linear equation in three variables.

$$\left[\begin{array}{rrr|r} -1 & -3 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{array}\right] \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow \left[\begin{array}{rrr|r} 1 & 0 & -5 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{array}\right]$$

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Therefore, $\vec{v} = t \left[\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{array}\right]$ for all $t \in \mathbb{R}$.

Problem

Are $A(4, -7, 9)$, $B(6, 4, 4)$ and $C(7, 10, -6)$ the vertices of a right angle triangle?

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None of the angles is $\frac{\pi}{2}$, and therefore the triangle is not a right angle triangle.

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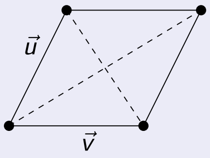

Define the parallelogram (rhombus) by vectors $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}$.

Then the diagonals are $\vec{u}+\vec{v}$ and $\vec{u}-\vec{v}$.

Show that $\vec{u}+\vec{v}$ and $\vec{u}-\vec{v}$ are perpendicular.

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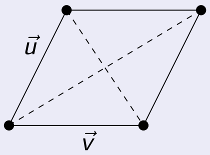

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$$\begin{aligned}
(\vec{u}+\vec{v}) \bullet (\vec{u}-\vec{v}) &= \vec{u}\bullet\vec{u} - \vec{u}\bullet\vec{v} + \vec{v}\bullet\vec{u} - \vec{v}\bullet\vec{v} \\
&= \|\vec{u}\|^2 - \vec{u}\bullet\vec{v} + \vec{u}\bullet\vec{v} - \|\vec{v}\|^2 \\
&= \|\vec{u}\|^2 - \|\vec{v}\|^2 \\
&= 0, \text{ since } \|\vec{u}\| = \|\vec{v}\|.
\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the diagonals are perpendicular.

Projections

Theorem

Given nonzero vectors $\vec{v}$ and $\vec{u}$ in $\mathbb{R}^n$(for $n = 2, 3...$), there exist unique vectors $\vec{v}_{||}, \vec{v}_{\perp}$ such that $\vec{v}$ can be written as a sum

$$\vec{v} = \vec{v}_{||} + \vec{v}_{\perp}$$

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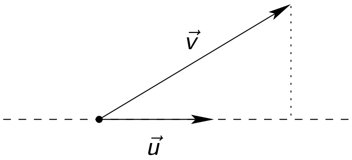

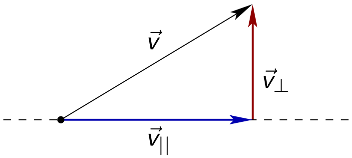

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where $\vec{v}_{||}$ is parallel to $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}_{\perp}$ is orthogonal to $\vec{u}$.

$\vec{v}_{||}$ is the projection of $\vec{v}$ onto $\vec{u}$, written $\vec{v}_{||} = \text{proj}_{\vec{u}}\vec{v}$ and $\vec{v}_{\perp} = \vec{v} - \vec{v}_{||}$.

Projections

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Projections

Theorem

Let $\vec{v}$ and $\vec{u}$ be vectors with $\vec{u} \neq \vec{0}$.

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Problem

Let $\vec{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$ and $\vec{u} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{bmatrix}$. Find vectors $\vec{v}_{||}$ and $\vec{v}_{\perp}$ so that $\vec{v} = \vec{v}_{||} + \vec{v}_{\perp}$, with $\vec{v}_{||}$ parallel to $\vec{u}$ and $\vec{v}_{\perp}$ orthogonal to $\vec{u}$.

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$$\vec{v}_{\perp} = \vec{v} - \vec{v}_{||} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} - \frac{5}{11} \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{11} \begin{bmatrix} 7 \\ -16 \\ 5 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 7/11 \\ -16/11 \\ 5/11 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Distance from a Point to a Line

Problem

Let $P = (3, 2, -1)$ be a point in $\mathbb{R}^3$ and L a line with equation

$$\begin{bmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 3 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ -1 \\ -2 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Find the shortest distance from P to L, and find the point Q on L that is closest to P.

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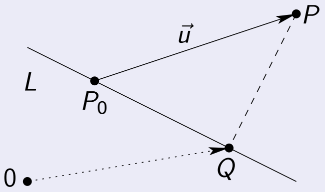

Let $P_0 = (2, 1, 3)$ be a point on L, and let $\vec{d} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 & -1 & -2 \end{bmatrix}^T$.
Then $\overrightarrow{P_0Q} = \mathrm{proj}_{\vec{d}} \overrightarrow{P_0P}$, $\overrightarrow{0Q} = \overrightarrow{0P_0} + \overrightarrow{P_0Q}$, and the shortest distance from P to L is the length of $\overrightarrow{QP}$, where $\overrightarrow{QP} = \overrightarrow{P_0P} - \overrightarrow{P_0Q}$.

Solution (continued)

$$\overrightarrow{P_0P} = \left[\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ 1 \\ -4 \end{array}\right], \ \vec{d} = \left[\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ -1 \\ -2 \end{array}\right].$$

$$\overrightarrow{P_0Q} = \text{proj}_{\vec{d}}\overrightarrow{P_0P} = \left(\frac{\overrightarrow{P_0P} \bullet \vec{d}}{\|\vec{d}\|^2}\right)\vec{d} = \frac{10}{14}\left[\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ -1 \\ -2 \end{array}\right] = \frac{1}{7}\left[\begin{array}{r} 15 \\ -5 \\ -10 \end{array}\right].$$

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$$\overrightarrow{P_0Q} = \text{proj}_{\vec{d}}\overrightarrow{P_0P} = \left(\frac{\overrightarrow{P_0P} \bullet \vec{d}}{\|\vec{d}\|^2} \right) \vec{d} = \frac{10}{14} \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ -1 \\ -2 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{7} \begin{bmatrix} 15 \\ -5 \\ -10 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Therefore,

$$\overrightarrow{0Q} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 3 \end{bmatrix} + \frac{1}{7} \begin{bmatrix} 15 \\ -5 \\ -10 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{7} \begin{bmatrix} 29 \\ 2 \\ 11 \end{bmatrix},$$

so $Q = \left(\frac{29}{7}, \frac{2}{7}, \frac{11}{7}\right)$.

Solution (continued)

Finally, the shortest distance from $P(3,2,-1)$ to L is the length of $\overrightarrow{QP}$, where

$$\overrightarrow{QP} = \overrightarrow{P_0P} - \overrightarrow{P_0Q} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ -4 \end{bmatrix} - \frac{1}{7}\begin{bmatrix} 15 \\ -5 \\ -10 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{2}{7}\begin{bmatrix} -4 \\ 6 \\ -9 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Solution (continued)

Finally, the shortest distance from $P(3, 2, -1)$ to L is the length of $\overrightarrow{QP}$, where

$$\overrightarrow{QP} = \overrightarrow{P_0P} - \overrightarrow{P_0Q} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ -4 \end{bmatrix} - \frac{1}{7}\begin{bmatrix} 15 \\ -5 \\ -10 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{2}{7}\begin{bmatrix} -4 \\ 6 \\ -9 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Therefore the shortest distance from P to L is

$$\|\overrightarrow{QP}\| = \frac{2}{7}\sqrt{(-4)^2 + 6^2 + (-9)^2} = \frac{2}{7}\sqrt{133}.$$