

# Linear Algebra (Gilbert Strang): 07. Solving $Ax=0$ : pivot variables, special solutions

## Computing the Nullspace ( $Ax=0$ )

$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 2 & 2 \\ 2 & 4 & 6 & 8 \\ 3 & 6 & 8 & 10 \end{bmatrix}$  } 2nd row is dependent.

in the same direction.  
dependent.

$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 & 4 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = U.$

2 pivot columns.  $\rightarrow$  you can solve the equations with  $x_1, x_3$ .

Rank of  $A = \#$  of pivots  
 $= 2.$

2 free columns.  $\rightarrow$  you can assign any number to  $x_2, x_4$ .

$X = C \begin{bmatrix} \square \\ \square \\ \square \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$

$x_1 + 2x_2 + 2x_3 + 2x_4 = 0 \rightarrow x_1 = -2$   
 $2x_3 + 4x_4 = 0 \rightarrow x_3 = 0$

$\rightarrow \boxed{UX=0}$

any multiple of this is in the null space.  
you can give any variable.

"The null space contains exactly all the combinations of the special solutions".

## Reduced Row Echelon Form

$\rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$  has zeros above and also under pivots.

$\rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 & 4 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = R = \text{ref}(A)$

multiplying  $\alpha$  won't change the solutions

notice  $I = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$  in pivot rows/columns

$\rightarrow \boxed{RX=0}$

$\begin{bmatrix} 2 & -2 \\ 0 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$  free cols.  
 $\rightarrow F.$

ref form

$R = \begin{bmatrix} I & F \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$  r pivot rows

r pivot cols  $\rightarrow$  n-r free cols

$RN=0$

nullspace matrix (columns = special basis).

$\rightarrow N = \begin{bmatrix} -F \\ I \end{bmatrix}$

$\therefore RX=0$

$\begin{bmatrix} I & F \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_{\text{pivot}} \\ x_{\text{free}} \end{bmatrix} = 0$

$x_{\text{pivot}} = -Fx_{\text{free}}$



$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 2 & 4 & 6 \\ 2 & 6 & 8 \\ 2 & 8 & 10 \end{bmatrix}$$

→ we can expect that we will only have 2 pivot columns, because  $\text{col } 1 + \text{col } 2 = \text{col } 3$ .

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 4 & 4 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 0 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = U.$$

→ rank is 2.

pivot cols.

free cols.

$$UX = 0 \rightarrow X = \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

(free variable = 1)

$$\text{whole nullspace} = c \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = c \begin{bmatrix} F \\ I \end{bmatrix}$$

#.

$$I \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow F$$

zeros.