Vectors



Scalars and Vectors

A **vector** is a quantity that has a **magnitude** and a **direction**. One example of a vector is velocity. The velocity of an object is determined by the magnitude(speed) and direction of travel. Other examples of vectors are force, displacement and acceleration.

A **scalar** is a quantity that has magnitude only. Mass, time and volume are all examples of scalar quantities.

Example 1.

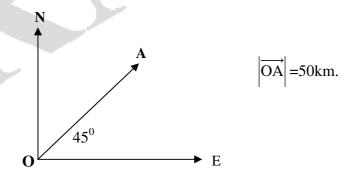
If a car travels from point O to point A, which is 50km. away in a north-easterly direction, then the **displacement** of the car from O is **50km.NE.** The displacement of the car is specified by the distance travelled (50km.) and the direction of travel (NE.) from O.

Displacement is therefore a vector, and the magnitude of the displacement (distance), is a scalar.

On the diagram below the displacement is represented by the directed line segment \overrightarrow{OA} .

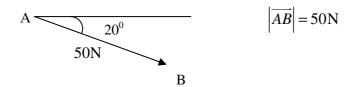
The length of the line represents the magnitude of the displacement and is written $|\overrightarrow{OA}|$.

The arrowhead represents the direction of the displacement.



Example 2.

A force of 50 Newton at an angle of 20^{0} to the horizontal downward, is applied to a wheelbarrow. The diagram below shows a vector representing this force.



Geometric Vectors

We will be considering vectors in three-dimensional space defined by three mutually perpendicular directions.

Definitions and conventions.

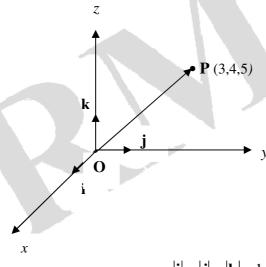
Vectors will be denoted by lower case **bold** letters such as **a**, **b**, **c**.

Unit vectors i, j, k

Vectors with a magnitude of **one** in the direction of the x-axis, y-axis and z-axis will be denoted by \mathbf{i} , \mathbf{j} , and \mathbf{k} respectively.

The notation (a, b, c) will be used to denote the vector $(a\mathbf{i} + b\mathbf{j} + c\mathbf{k})$ as well as the coordinates of a point P (a, b, c). The context will determine which meaning is correct.

Example



 $|\mathbf{i}| = |\mathbf{j}| = |\mathbf{k}| = 1$

In the diagram above the point P has coordinates (3,4,5).

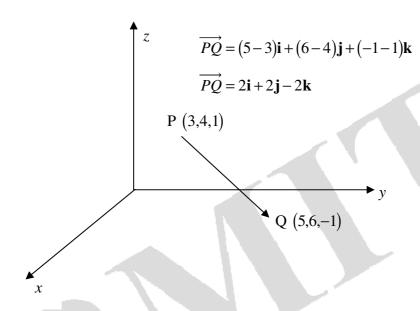
The vector \overrightarrow{OP} is the vector $3\mathbf{i} + 4\mathbf{j} + 5\mathbf{k}$. This may also be written (3,4,5).

Directed Line Segment.

The directed line segment, or geometric vector, \overrightarrow{PQ} , from $P(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ to $Q(x_2, y_2, z_2)$ is found by subtracting the co-ordinates of P (the initial point) from the co-ordinates of Q (the final point).

$$\overrightarrow{PQ} = ((x_2 - x_1)\mathbf{i} + (y_2 - y_1)\mathbf{j} + (z_2 - z_1)\mathbf{k})$$

Example.



The directed line segment \overrightarrow{PQ} is represented by the vector $2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - 2\mathbf{k}$, or (2, 2, -2). Any other directed line segment with the same length and same directon as \overrightarrow{PQ} is also represented by $2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - 2\mathbf{k}$ or (2, 2, -2).

The directed line segment \overrightarrow{QP} has the same length as \overrightarrow{PQ} but is in the opposite direction.

$$\overrightarrow{QP} = -\overrightarrow{PQ} = -(2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - 2\mathbf{k}) = -2\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} + 2\mathbf{k} \text{ or } (-2, -2, 2)$$

Position Vector.

The position vector of any point is the directed line segment from the origin O(0,0,0) to the point and is given by the co-ordinates of the point.

The position vector of P(3, 4, 1) is $3\mathbf{i} + 4\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k}$, or (3, 4, 1).

Exercise 1. Given the points A(3, 0,4) B(-2, 4, 3) and C(1,-5,0), find:

- (a) \overrightarrow{AB}
- (b) \overrightarrow{AC}

(c) \overrightarrow{CB}

- (d) \overrightarrow{BC}
- (e) \overrightarrow{CA}

(f) The position vectors of A, B and C.

Compare your answers 1(b)and 1(e), and 1(c) and 1(d). What do you notice?

Length or Magnitude of a Vector.

The length of a vector $\mathbf{a} = a_1 \mathbf{i} + a_2 \mathbf{j} + a_3 \mathbf{k}$ is written $|\mathbf{a}|$ and is evaluated by:

$$|\mathbf{a}| = \sqrt{a_1^2 + a_2^2 + a_3^2}$$

For example the length of the vector $2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - 2\mathbf{k}$ equals $\sqrt{2^2 + 2^2 + (-2)^2} = \sqrt{12} = 2\sqrt{3}$ a_1, a_2, a_3 are often referred to as the components of vector \mathbf{a} .

Unit Vector

A vector with a magnitude of one is called a unit vector. If \mathbf{a} is any vector then a unit vector parallel to \mathbf{a} is written $\hat{\mathbf{a}}$ (\mathbf{a} "hat"). The "hat" symbolises a unit vector.

Vector **a** can then be written $\mathbf{a} = |\mathbf{a}|\hat{\mathbf{a}}$

therefore
$$\hat{\mathbf{a}} = \frac{\mathbf{a}}{|\mathbf{a}|}$$

Example

A unit vector parallel to $\mathbf{a} = (1, 2, 3)$

is the vector
$$\hat{\mathbf{a}} = \frac{\mathbf{a}}{|\mathbf{a}|} = \frac{(1, 2, 3)}{\sqrt{1^2 + 2^2 + 3^2}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{14}} (1, 2, 3)$$

Adding and Subtracting Vectors.

Vectors are added or subtracted by

- adding or subtracting their corresponding components
- using the triangle rule
- by using the parallogram rule.

Example

If $\mathbf{a} = (-3, 4, 2)$ and $\mathbf{b} = (-1, -2, 3)$, find:

(i)
$$\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b}$$
 (ii) $\mathbf{a} - \mathbf{b}$.

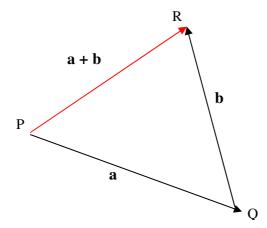
Adding or subtracting components

(i)
$$\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b} = (-3, 4, 2) + (-1, -2, 3) = (-4, 2, 5)$$

Similarly (ii)
$$\mathbf{a} - \mathbf{b} = (-3, 4, 2) - (-1, -2, 3) = (-2, 6, -1)$$

Triangle Rule

(i) $\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b}$



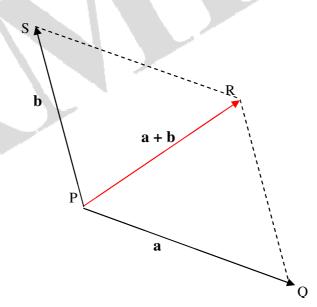
Place the tail of vector \mathbf{b} at the head of vector \mathbf{a} (point Q). The directed line segment \overrightarrow{PR} from the tail of vector \mathbf{a} to the head of vector \mathbf{b} is the vector $\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b}$.

(ii) To subtract **b** from **a**, reverse the direction of **b** to give **-b** then add **a** and **-b**.

$$\mathbf{a} - \mathbf{b} = \mathbf{a} + (-\mathbf{b})$$

Parallelogram Rule

(i) $\mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b}$



 ${\bf a}$ and ${\bf b}$ are placed "tail-to-tail" (point P) and the parallelogram (PQRS) completed. The diagonal PR is the sum ${\bf a}+{\bf b}$.

(ii) To find (a - b), reverse the direction of b to give -b then add a and -b.

Exercise 2.

For vectors \mathbf{p} (3, 6, 5), \mathbf{q} (-4, 1, 0) and \mathbf{r} (1, -3, 5) find:

(a)
$$\mathbf{p} + \mathbf{q}$$

(b)
$$\mathbf{r} + \mathbf{p}$$

$$(c) p - q$$

Multiplication of a vector by a scalar.

To multiply vector $\mathbf{a} = a_1 \mathbf{i} + a_2 \mathbf{j} + a_3 \mathbf{k}$ by a scalar, m, multiply each component of \mathbf{a} by m.

$$m\mathbf{a} = ma_1\mathbf{i} + ma_2\mathbf{j} + ma_3\mathbf{k}$$

The result is a vector of length $|m| \times |\mathbf{a}|$

If m > 0 the resultant vector is in the same direction as **a**

If m < 0 the resultant vector is in the opposite direction from **a**.

Two vectors **a** and **b** are said to be parallel if and only if $\mathbf{a} = k\mathbf{b}$ where k is a real constant.

Example 1

 $\mathbf{a} = (3\mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j} - 2\mathbf{k})$ is multiplied by 7

$$7a = 7(3i + j - 2k) = 21i + 7j - 14k$$
.

The magnitude of a is

$$|\mathbf{a}| = \sqrt{3^2 + 1^2 + (-2)^2} = \sqrt{14}$$

$$|7\mathbf{a}| = \sqrt{21^2 + 7^2 + (-14)^2} = \sqrt{686} = 7\sqrt{14} = 7|a|$$

Example 2

Find the value of m so that the vector \mathbf{a} , (4, m, 8) is parallel to the vector \mathbf{b} , (-6, 3, 12).

For **a** and **b** to be parallel $\mathbf{a} = k\mathbf{b}$

Therefore
$$(4, m, 8) = k (-6, 3, -12) = (-6k, 3k, -12k)$$

equating "i" components

$$4 = -6k$$

$$k = \frac{-2}{3}$$

equating "j" components

$$m = 3k$$

$$\therefore m = 3 \times \frac{-2}{3}$$

$$m = -2$$

Exercise 3

Find the following

(a)
$$3 \times (i + 3j - 5k)$$

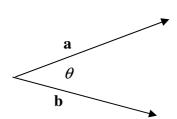
(b)
$$8 \times (7i + 2j + 4k)$$

(c)
$$-4 \times (j - 3k)$$

Multiplication of a vector by a vector

(1) Dot product or scalar product

The dot product of two vectors \mathbf{a} (a_1, a_2, a_3) and \mathbf{b} (b_1, b_2, b_3) is a **scalar**, defined by $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = |\mathbf{a}| |\mathbf{b}| \cos \theta, \text{ where } \theta \text{ is the angle between } \mathbf{a} \text{ and } \mathbf{b}$ and $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = \mathbf{b} \cdot \mathbf{a}$



If **a** is perpendicular to **b** then $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = 0$ ($\cos(\pi/2) = 0$). In particular $\mathbf{i} \cdot \mathbf{j} = \mathbf{j} \cdot \mathbf{k} = \mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{i} = 0$

If **a** is parallel to **b** then $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = |\mathbf{a}| |\mathbf{b}|$ (cos(0)=1) In particular $\mathbf{i} \cdot \mathbf{i} = \mathbf{j} \cdot \mathbf{j} = \mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{k} = 1$

$$Also (a_1\mathbf{i} + a_2\mathbf{j} + a_3\mathbf{k}) \bullet (b_1\mathbf{i} + b_2\mathbf{j} + b_3\mathbf{k}) = (a_1b_1\mathbf{i} \bullet \mathbf{i} + a_1b_2\mathbf{i} \bullet \mathbf{j} + a_1b_3\mathbf{i} \bullet \mathbf{k} + a_2b_1\mathbf{j} \bullet \mathbf{i} + a_2b_2\mathbf{j} \bullet \mathbf{j} + a_2b_3\mathbf{j} \bullet \mathbf{k} + a_3b_1\mathbf{k} \bullet \mathbf{i} + a_3b_2\mathbf{k} \bullet \mathbf{j} + a_3b_3\mathbf{k} \bullet \mathbf{k})$$

Thus $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b}$ can be defined by $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = a_1b_1 + a_2b_2 + a_3b_3$

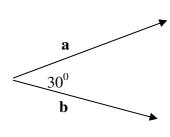
Example 1

Find the dot product of
$$(2\mathbf{i} + 3\mathbf{j} + 4\mathbf{k})$$
 and $(-\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k})$
 $(2\mathbf{i} + 3\mathbf{j} + 4\mathbf{k}) \bullet (-\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k}) = 2(-1) + 3(-2) + (4)(1)$
 $= -2 - 6 + 4$
 $= -4$
 $(2\mathbf{i} + 3\mathbf{j} + 4\mathbf{k}) \bullet (-\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k}) = -4$

Example 2

Find the scalar product of **a** and **b**, as drawn, below where

$$|a| = \sqrt{14}$$
 and $|b| = \sqrt{6}$



$$\mathbf{a} \bullet \mathbf{b} = |\mathbf{a}| |\mathbf{b}| \cos \theta$$
$$= \sqrt{14} \times \sqrt{6} \times \cos 30^{0}$$
$$= \sqrt{14} \times \sqrt{6} \times \frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$$
$$= 3\sqrt{7}$$
$$\mathbf{a} \bullet \mathbf{b} = 3\sqrt{7}$$

Exercise 4 Find the dot product of the following vectors:

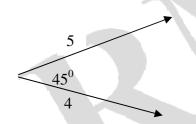
(a) 3i and 5j

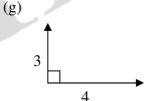
(b)
$$2i + 3k$$
 and $7i + 2j + 4k$ (c) $5k$ and $j - 2k$

(d) (2, 0, 4) and (-3, 1, 3)

(e)
$$(0, 5, 1)$$
 and $(4, 0, 0)$

(f)





(2) Cross product or vector product

The cross product of two vectors \mathbf{a} and \mathbf{b} is the vector $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}$, which is perpendicular to **both** \mathbf{a} and b and is given by

$$\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ \mathbf{a}_1 & \mathbf{a}_2 & \mathbf{a}_3 \\ \mathbf{b}_1 & \mathbf{b}_2 & \mathbf{b}_3 \end{vmatrix}$$

The magnitude of $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}$ is given by $|\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}| = |\mathbf{a}| |\mathbf{b}| \sin \theta$ where θ is the angle between \mathbf{a} and \mathbf{b} .

The direction of $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}$ is that in which your thumb would point if the fingers of your right are curled from a to b.

In particular

$$i \times j = k$$

$$\mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{k} = \mathbf{i}, \qquad \mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{i} = \mathbf{j}$$

$$k \vee i - i$$

$$i \times k = -j$$
 $k \times j = -i$ $j \times i = -k$

$$\mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{i} = -1$$

$$i \times i = -k$$

If **a** is parallel to **b** then $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = 0$. $(\sin 0^0 = 0)$ In particular $\mathbf{i} \times \mathbf{i} = \mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{j} = \mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{k} = \mathbf{0}$

If **a** is perpendicular to **b** then $|\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}| = |\mathbf{a}| |\mathbf{b}|$ (sin90⁰ =1)

 $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = -\mathbf{b} \times \mathbf{a}$ (the cross product is not commutative.)

Example 1

Find $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}$ if $\mathbf{a} = 2\mathbf{i} + 3\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k}$ and $\mathbf{b} = 5\mathbf{j} + 3\mathbf{k}$

$$\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \\ 0 & 5 & 3 \end{vmatrix} = (9 - 5)\mathbf{i} - (6 - 0)\mathbf{j} + (10 - 0)\mathbf{k}$$

$$\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = 4\mathbf{i} - 6\mathbf{j} + 10\mathbf{k}$$

Example 2

Find $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}$ if $\mathbf{a} = (2,1,1)$ and $\mathbf{b} = (-2,4,0)$

$$\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ 2 & 1 & 1 \\ -2 & 4 & 0 \end{vmatrix} = (0 - 4)\mathbf{i} - (0 + 2)\mathbf{j} + (8 + 2)\mathbf{k}$$

$$\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = -4\mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{j} + 10\mathbf{k}$$

Example 3

Find $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}$ if $\mathbf{a} = (2,1,1)$ and $\mathbf{b} = (8,4,4)$

Because $\mathbf{a} = 4\mathbf{b}$, \mathbf{a} is parallel to \mathbf{b} therefore $\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b} = \mathbf{0}$

Exercise 5 Find the cross product of the following vectors:

(a)
$$\mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{k}$$

(b)
$$\mathbf{i} \times 4\mathbf{i}$$

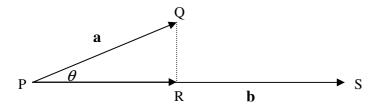
(c)
$$(2i + 3j - k) \times (3j + 2k)$$

(d)
$$3\mathbf{j} \times 5\mathbf{i}$$

(e)
$$(\mathbf{i} - 3\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k}) \times (2\mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k})$$

Projection of vectors.

Consider the diagram below:



Let
$$\overrightarrow{PQ} = \mathbf{a}$$
 and $\overrightarrow{PS} = \mathbf{b}$.

Scalar projection

The **scalar projection** of vector **a** in the direction of vector **b** is the length of the straight line PR or $|\overrightarrow{PR}|$.

$$|\overrightarrow{PR}| = |\mathbf{a}|\cos\theta.$$
 Also $\cos\theta = \frac{\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b}}{|\mathbf{a}||\mathbf{b}|}$ (because $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = |\mathbf{a}| |\mathbf{b}|\cos\theta$)

Therefore

$$\left| \overrightarrow{PR'} \right| = \left(|\mathbf{a}| \right) \left(\frac{\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b}}{|\mathbf{a}||\mathbf{b}|} \right) = \frac{\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b}}{|\mathbf{b}|} = \mathbf{a} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{b}} \quad \text{(cancel } |\mathbf{a}|, \text{ and use } \frac{\mathbf{b}}{|\mathbf{b}|} = \hat{\mathbf{b}} \text{)}$$

The scalar projection of a vector **a** in the direction of vector **b** is given by

$$\frac{\mathbf{a} \bullet \mathbf{b}}{|\mathbf{b}|} = \mathbf{a} \bullet \hat{\mathbf{b}} \quad \text{or} \quad |\mathbf{a}| \cos \theta$$

Vector projection

The **vector projection** of vector **a** in the direction of vector **b** is a **vector** in the direction of **b** with **a magnitude** equal to the length of the straight line PR or $|\overrightarrow{PR}|$.

Therefore the vector projection of \mathbf{a} in the direction of \mathbf{b} is the scalar projection multiplied by a unit vector in the direction of \mathbf{b} .

The **vector projection** of vector **a** in the direction of vector **b** is given by

$$(\mathbf{a} \bullet \hat{\mathbf{b}}) \hat{\mathbf{b}} = \frac{(\mathbf{a} \bullet \mathbf{b}) \mathbf{b}}{|\mathbf{b}|^2}$$

Angle between two vectors

The angle, θ between two vectors can be found from the definition of the dot product

$$\mathbf{a} \bullet \mathbf{b} = |\mathbf{a}| |\mathbf{b}| \cos \theta$$

therefore
$$\cos \theta = \frac{\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b}}{|\mathbf{a}||\mathbf{b}|}$$

$$\theta$$
 can also be found from $\cos \theta = \frac{\mathbf{a} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{b}}}{|\mathbf{a}|}$

Example

Find (a) the scalar projection of vector $\mathbf{a} = (2, 3, 1)$ in the direction of vector $\mathbf{b} = (5, -2, 2)$.

- (b) the angle between **a** and **b**.
- (c) the vector projection of **a** in the direction of **b**.
- (a) Scalar projection

$$|\mathbf{b}| = \sqrt{25 + 4 + 4} = \sqrt{33}$$
 therefore $\hat{\mathbf{b}} = \frac{(5, -2, 2)}{\sqrt{33}}$

$$\mathbf{a} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{b}} = (2, 3, 1) \cdot \frac{(5, -2, 2)}{\sqrt{33}} = \frac{10 + (-6) + 2}{\sqrt{33}} = \frac{6}{\sqrt{33}}$$

The scalar projection of **a** in the direction of **b** is $\frac{6}{\sqrt{33}}$

(b) Angle between a and b

The scalar projection of **a** in the direction of **b** is also equal to $|\mathbf{a}|\cos\theta$, where θ is the angle between **a** and **b**.

Therefore
$$\frac{6}{\sqrt{33}} = |\mathbf{a}| \cos \theta. \qquad |\mathbf{a}| = \sqrt{2^2 + 3^2 + 1^2} = \sqrt{14}$$

$$\therefore \frac{6}{\sqrt{33}} = \sqrt{14} \cos \theta$$

$$\therefore \cos \theta = \frac{6}{\sqrt{33 \times 14}} = 0.2791$$

$$\therefore \theta = 74^{\circ}$$

The angle between \mathbf{a} and \mathbf{b} is 74° .

(c) Vector projection

The vector projection **a** in the direction of **b** equals:

(scalar projection a in the direction of b) $\hat{\boldsymbol{b}}$

$$= \frac{6}{\sqrt{33}} \times \frac{(5, -2, 2)}{\sqrt{33}} = \frac{6(5, -2, 2)}{33}$$

The vector projection of **a** in the direction of **b** is $\frac{6(5,-2,2)}{33}$

Exercise 6 For the following pairs of vectors find:

- (i) the scalar projection of **a** on **b**
- (ii) the angle between **a** and **b**
- (iii) the vector projection of a on b

(a)
$$\mathbf{a} = (2, 3, 1)$$
 $\mathbf{b} = (5, 0, 3)$

(b)
$$\mathbf{a} = (0, 0, 3)$$
 $\mathbf{b} = (0, 0, 7)$

(c)
$$\mathbf{a} = (5, 0, 0)$$
 $\mathbf{b} = (0, 3, 0)$

(d)
$$\mathbf{a} = (-3, 2, -1)$$
 $\mathbf{b} = (2, 1, 2)$

Answers

- 1.(a) (-5, 4, -1)
- **(b)** (-2, -5, -4)
- (c) (-3, 9, 3)

- **(d)** (3, -9, -3)
- (e) (2, 5, 4)
- (f) $\overrightarrow{OA} = 3\mathbf{i} + 4\mathbf{k}$, $\overrightarrow{OB} = -2\mathbf{i} + 4\mathbf{j} + 3\mathbf{k}$, $\overrightarrow{OC} = \mathbf{i} 5\mathbf{j}$
- **2.** (a) (-1, 7, 5)
- **(b)** (4, 3, 10)

(c) (7, 5, 5)

- 3. (a) 3i + 9j 15k
- **(b)** 56i + 16j + 32k
- $(\mathbf{c}) 4\mathbf{j} + 12\mathbf{k}$

- **4.** (a) 0
- **(b)** 26
- (c) -10
- **(d)** 6
- **(e)** 0
- **(f)** $10\sqrt{2}$

- 5. (a) i
- **(b)** 0
- (c) 9i 4j + 6k
- (d) -15k
- (e) -i + 9j + 7k

 $(\mathbf{g}) 0$

6.(a)(i) $\frac{13}{\sqrt{34}}$

١.

(ii) 53^0

(iii) $\frac{13}{34}$ (5, 0, 3)

(b)(i) 3

(ii) 0^0

(iii) $\frac{3}{7}(0, 0, 7)$

(c)(i) 0

(ii) 90^0

(iii) 0

(d)(i) -2

(ii) 122⁰

(iii) $\frac{-2}{3}(2, 1, 2)$