



Recall:How to solve a system of linear equations

system of equations

$$\begin{cases} -x_1 + 2x_2 + 3x_3 = 4 \\ 2x_1 + 6x_3 = 9 \\ 4x_1 - x_2 - 3x_3 = 0 \end{cases}$$



*make
a matrix*



augmented
matrix

*Gauss-Jordan
elimination*

solutions

$$\begin{cases} x_1 = \dots \\ x_2 = \dots \\ x_3 = \dots \end{cases}$$



*read off
solutions*

matrix in reduced
echelon form

- Every system of linear equations can be represented by a matrix
- Elementary row operations:
 - interchange of two rows
 - multiplication of a row by a non-zero number
 - addition of a multiple of one row to another row.
- Elementary row operations do not change solutions of systems of linear equations.

Definition

A matrix is in the *reduced echelon form* if:

- the non-zero entry of each row is a 1 (“a leading one”);
- the leading one in each row is to the right of the leading one in the row above it;
- all entries above each leading one are 0.

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & * & * & * & 0 & 0 & * & * & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & * & * & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & * & * & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

(* = any number)

Fact

If a system of linear equations is represented by a matrix in the reduced echelon form then it is easy to solve the system.

Example

$$\left[\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & 0 & 3 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 7 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{array} \right]$$

Proposition

A matrix in the reduced echelon form represents an inconsistent system if and only if it contains a row of the form

$$[0 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad \dots \quad 0 \quad 1]$$

i.e. with the leading one in the last column.

Example

$$\left[\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & 0 & 3 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 7 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

Note

In an augmented matrix in the reduced echelon form free variables correspond to columns of the coefficient matrix that do not contain leading ones.

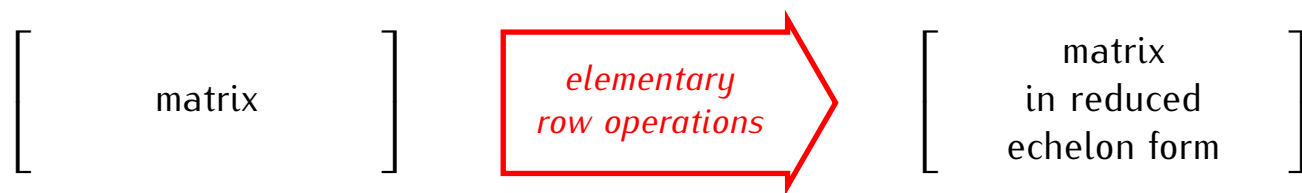
Example

$$\left[\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 5 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 6 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 7 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 8 \end{array} \right]$$

Note

A matrix in the reduced echelon represents a system of equations with exactly one solution if and only if it has a leading one in every column except for the last one.

Gauss-Jordan elimination process (= row reduction)



- ① Interchange rows, if necessary, to bring a non-zero element to the top of the first non-zero column of the matrix.
- ② Multiply the first row so that its first non-zero entry becomes 1.
- ③ Add multiples of the first row to eliminate non-zero entries below the leading one.
- ④ Ignore the first row; apply steps 1–3 to the rest of the matrix.
- ⑤ Eliminate non-zero entries above all leading ones.

Example.

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 4 & -8 & 0 & 4 \\ 2 & 6 & -6 & -2 & -4 \\ 2 & 7 & -8 & 0 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

How to solve systems of linear equations: example

$$\begin{cases} 4x_2 - 8x_3 = 4 \\ 2x_1 + 6x_2 - 6x_3 - 2x_4 = -4 \\ 2x_1 + 7x_2 - 8x_3 = -1 \end{cases}$$