Chapter 2

System of Linear Equations: Geometry

Where are we?

In Chapter 1 we learned to solve any system of linear equations in any number of variables. The answer is row reduction, which gives an algebraic solution. In Chapter 2 we put some geometry behind the algebra. It is the geometry that gives us intuition and deeper meaning. There are three main points:

Sec 2.3: $Ax = b$ is consistent $\Leftrightarrow$ b is in the span of the columns of A.

Sec 2.4: The solutions to $Ax = b$ are parallel to the solutions to $Ax = 0$.

Sec 2.9: The dim's of $\{b : Ax = b$ is consistent$\}$ and $\{$solutions to $Ax = b\}$ add up to the number of columns of A.

Section 2.1

Vectors

Outline

- Think of points in $\mathbb{R}^n$ as vectors.
- Learn how to add vectors and multiply them by a scalar
- Understand the geometry of adding vectors and multiplying them by a scalar
- Understand linear combinations algebraically and geometrically

Vectors

A vector is a matrix with one row or one column. We can think of a vector with n rows as:

- a point in $\mathbb{R}^n$
- an arrow in $\mathbb{R}^n$

To go from an arrow to a point in $\mathbb{R}^n$, we subtract the tip of the arrow from the starting point. Note that there are many arrows representing the same vector.

Adding vectors / parallelogram rule Demo

Scaling vectors Demo

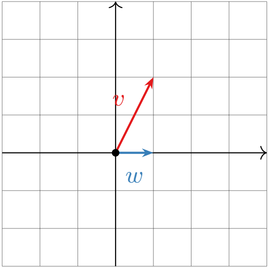
A scalar is just a real number. We use this term to indicate that we are scaling a vector by this number.

Linear Combinations

A linear combination of the vectors $v_1, \ldots, v_k$ is any vector

$$c_1 v_1 + c_2 v_2 + \cdots + c_k v_k$$

where $c_1, \ldots, c_k$ are real numbers.



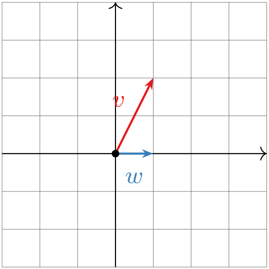
Let $v = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$ and $w = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$.

What are some linear combinations of v and w?

Poll

Is there a vector in $\mathbb{R}^2$ that is not a linear combination of v and w?

- yes
- no



Linear Combinations

What are some linear combinations of $(1, 1)$?

What are some linear combinations of $(1, 1)$ and $(2, 2)$?

What are some linear combinations of $(0, 0)$?

Summary of Section 2.1

- A vector is a point/arrow in $\mathbb{R}^n$
- We can add/scale vectors algebraically & geometrically (parallelogram rule)
- A linear combination of vectors $v_1, \ldots, v_k$ is a vector

$$c_1 v_1 + \cdots + c_k v_k$$

where $c_1, \ldots, c_k$ are real numbers.

Typical exam questions

True/False: For any collection of vectors $v_1, \dots, v_k$ in $\mathbb{R}^n$, the zero vector in $\mathbb{R}^n$ is a linear combination of $v_1, \dots, v_k$.

True/False: The vector $(1, 1)$ can be written as a linear combination of $(2, 2)$ and $(-2, -2)$ in infinitely many ways.

Suppose that v is a vector in $\mathbb{R}^n$, and consider the set of all linear combinations of v. What geometric shape is this?