Mathematics for Physics

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References

The course heavily follows the textbook by Alexander Altland and Jan von Delft, Mathematics for Physicist, 2019.

Contents

1 Introduction

These lecture notes provide an introduction to the mathematical background needed for the beginner physics student. While there is overlap with the mathematics notes, the emphasis here is different: the goal is to develop the abstract concepts and mathematical tools used in physics at a much faster pace rather than to prove every result from first principles.

Unlike standard undergraduate "methods" textbooks, here, abstraction plays a central role. This is due to the significant gap between the mathematical background of most undergraduates and the mathematics used in modern research and graduate-level physics. To avoid getting cooked later on it's better to burn early, advanced topics are introduced early.

For example, if your understanding of vectors is just an arrow in 3D space then later on quantum mechanics will be rawdogging you hard.

While we bypass the traditional $\delta - \epsilon$ formalism of real analysis, we maintain rigour through the lens of propositional and predicate logic. This ensures formal consistency without getting bogged down in the 'analysis for the sake of analysis' that often slows down physics students.

Now, a general concern of the audience would be that heavy emphasis on the structures would compromise computational fluency but this is not the case. There are plenty of examples of concrete calculations and a solid understanding of the underlying abstract ideas greatly improves practical and methodological skills.

The content presented here is highly sophisticated and even graduate students might find it challenging at first. However, this is by design, do not feel discouraged if you don't get the concepts immediately. Through hard work and dedication you'll be able to master the mathematics needed for any modern topic in physics.

These notes are written to be self-contained, so if you're primarily a student of physics you can just read these notes and move on to the physics courses without referencing to other maths courses that can be found on my blog.

The only prerequisite is a firm grasp of high-school mathematics (no cap fr). In particular, it would be helpful to brush up your knowledge of trigonometry, complex numbers and basic calculus.

We begin with Mathematical Logic and Set Theory. We then introduce Group Theory, homomorphisms and isomorphism. We develop Vector Spaces and Inner Products. Einstein Summation and Index Notation are also introduced early on. Differentiation and Integration are redefined. We treat the derivative as a Linear approximation of a manifold and the integral as a Generalised Sum, moving through Multidimensional Calculus, Curves, and Line Integrals. We then cover Scalar and Vector Fields, Total Differentiation, and Topological Criteria for Gradient Fields.

We master the "Big Three": Gauss, Stokes, and Green, applying them to Laplace and Poisson equations and the Circulation of Fields. We return to Linear Algebra to cover Eigenvalues, Characteristic Polynomials, and Matrix Diagonalization, extending these concepts to Linear Operators, Eigenfunctions, and Function Spaces with Unbounded Support. Transitioning to complex systems, we cover Complex Inner Products, Unitarity, and Hermiticity, utilizing a case study of Linear Algebra in Quantum Mechanics.

We cover Taylor Series (real and complex), Fourier Calculus, and the Delta Function, providing the tools for solving Differential Equations.

We introduce Functional Calculus (the Euler-Lagrange Equations) and conclude the core sequence with a deep dive into Complex Analysis.

The notes conclude with advanced topics including Multilinear Algebra, Tensors, Differentiable Manifolds, Tangent Spaces, Alternating Differential Forms, and an introduction to Riemannian Geometry.

Someone might claim that you need “mathematical maturity”, the transition from high school algebra to group theory is significant. However, I believe it is very ironic to say that comfort with abstract concepts is somehow supposed to come from doing cookie-cutter problems. Comfort with abstract generalised concepts doesn’t come from the concrete, intuitive examples, it comes from hitting it head on. Even the best mathematics students struggle a lot after years of computational learning when they encounter analysis and algebra the first time.

Intuition however given is not incentivised, at some point in your mathematical studies you run out of physical intuition and you need to think in abstraction exclusively, trying to force geometric analogies can be counterproductive in such cases.

Good luck dawg!

2 Mathematical Foundations

2.1 Sets and maps

We start with a review of intuitive set theory, but we won't study them as merely a tools, but as mathematical structures. The most basic mathematical structure is considered to be sets.

Sets

Definition 2.1 (Set)**.** A **set** is a collection of objects, called the **elements** of the set. The formula $a \in A$ indicates that "a in an element of set A".

Remark 2.2. We denote sets using the standard curly brackets {a, b, c, ...}. Oftentimes we use conditional rules to define sets, the standard notation being $A = \{x|\, E(x)\}$, where x is a "placeholder", the **free variable** and $E(x)$ is a property satisfied by x.

Remark 2.3. There is an issue with defining sets in this way when we consider infinite sets, but within restricted comprehension it is okay to study sets in this way for practical purposes.[1]

Definition 2.4 (Cartesian Product)**. Cartesian product** of two sets is defined as

$$A \times B = \{(x, y)|\, x \in A \wedge y \in B\}. \tag{1}$$

Remark 2.5. Here, the wedge $\wedge$ is the **conjuction** logical connective which essentially means that both $x \in A$ AND $y \in B$ need to be true for (x, y) to be an element of the cartesian product.

Example 2.6. For two sets $A = \{x, +, \Delta\}$ and $B = \{\circ, \Box\}$, their cartesian product is:

$$A \times B = \{(x, \circ), (x, \Box), (+, \circ), (+, \Box), (\Delta, \circ), (\Delta, \Box), \}$$

Maps

Definition 2.7 (Maps)**.** A **map** F, is a "rule" which assigns to each element a (argument) of a set A called the **domain** an element b (image) of a set B called the **codomain** of the map. Mathematically, it is denoted as:

$$F : A \to B, \quad a \mapsto F(a). \tag{2}$$

Example 2.8.

$$F : \mathbb{N}_0 \to \{-1, 1\}, \quad n \mapsto F(n) \coloneqq (-1)^n$$

Definition 2.9 (Image)**. Image** of a set A under the map F is defined as,

$$F(A) = \{F(a)|\, a \in A\} \subseteq B. \tag{3}$$

Definition 2.10. A map F is called,

1. **surjective**: if $F(A) = B$.

[1]See the notes on *Mathematical Foundations* for details on Russell's Paradox.

2. **injective**: if $\forall x, y \in A : (F(x) = F(y)) \to (x = y)$.

3. **bijective**: if it is both injective and surjective, $\forall b \in B : \exists! a(b = F(a))$.

Definition 2.11 (Composition)**.** Let $F : A \to B$ and $G : B \to C$ be two functions. Then we define a new function $G \circ F$, the **composition** of F followed by G, by

$$G \circ F : A \to C, \quad a \mapsto G(F(a)).$$

Example 2.12. Let A, B, C be three sets equal to $\mathbb{Z}$. $F(a) = a + 1$, $G(b) = 2b$ then $(G \circ F)(a) = 2(a + 1)$.

Definition 2.13 (Inverse Maps)**.** For a bijective map $F : A \to B$, an **inverse map** $F^{-1} : B \to A$, such that $F(a) \mapsto F^{-1}(F(a)) = a$ for every $a \in A$ exists.

Definition 2.14 (Binary Operation)**.** A **binary operation** is a map H defined on a cartesian product $A \times B$ as

$$H : A \times B \to C, \quad (a, b) \mapsto c = H(a, b).$$

Example 2.15. The shape of sand dune can be described by a map, $h : \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$, $(x, y) \mapsto h(x, y)$.

2.2 Groups

Groups

While sets are mundane containers of objects, they don't do much. The first structure where we can do something with the objects is a *group*.

Definition 2.16 (Group)**.** A **group** $G \coloneqq (A, \bullet)$ is a pair of a set A along with a binary operation $\bullet$ called the **group law**:

$$\bullet : A \times A \to A, \quad (a, b) \mapsto a \bullet b. \tag{4}$$

which satisfy the **group axioms**:

1. **Closure**: $\forall a, b \in A, a \bullet b \in A$.

2. **Associativity**: $\forall a, b, c \in A, (a \bullet b) \bullet c = a \bullet (b \bullet c)$.

3. **Neutral element**: $\exists e \in A : \forall a \in A, a \bullet e = e \bullet a = a$.

4. **Inverse element**: $\forall a, \exists b \in A : a \bullet b = b \bullet a = e$.

Definition 2.17 (Abelian Group)**.** For a group $G = (A, \bullet)$, if the group law is

1. **Commutative**: $\forall a, b \in A, a \bullet b = b \bullet a$, then G is an **abelian group**.

2. **Non-commutative**: $\exists a \in A \exists b \in A, a \bullet b \neq b \bullet a$, then G is a **non-abelian group**.

Example 2.18 (Rotation of three dimensional space)**.** Rotation of a book in three dimensions can be represented as succession of rotations around the coordinate axis, the set of all these rotations forms a group where the group operation is the successive application of rotations. This operation is non-commutative since rotation about z-axis followed by x-axis is not the same as in the reverse order.

Example 2.19 (Rotation of a lattice about a fixed axis)**.** Let $r(\phi)$ be rotation of a lattice about angle ϕ from its principal axis. By symmetry, $r(\phi + 360) = r(\phi)$. The set of all possible right-angle rotations, $R_{90} \coloneqq \{r(\phi) |\ \phi \in \{0, 90, 180, 270\}\}$.

We define a binary operation of two rotations about a fixed axis as the sum of the angles:

$$\bullet : R_{90} \times R_{90} \to R_{90}, \quad (r(\phi), r(\phi')) \mapsto r(\phi) \bullet r(\phi') \coloneqq r(\phi + \phi').$$

So, $r(0) \bullet r(90) = r(90)$, $r(90) \bullet r(180) = r(270)$, $r(270) \bullet r(90) = r(180)$. To show the rest of operations we can use a table as such:

$\bullet$	0	90	180	270
0	0	90	180	270
90	90	180	270	0
180	180	270	0	90
270	270	0	90	180

From the table, it is clear that $r(\phi) \bullet r(\phi') = r(\phi') \bullet r(\phi)$ for all $\phi \in R_{90}$, therefore $(R_{90}, \bullet)$ is an abelian group. The neutral element is $r(0)$ and the inverse of $r(\phi)$ is $r(360 - \phi)$.

Definition 2.20 (Modulo)**.** For $p, q \in \mathbb{Z}$, **modulo**, $p \bmod q$ is the remainder of p divided by q.

Example 2.21. $5 \bmod 3 = 2$, $6 \bmod 2 = 0$, $4 \bmod 7 = 4$, $-3 \bmod 4 = (-4 + 1) \bmod 4 = 1$.

Example 2.22 (Addition of $\mathbb{Z}$ modulo q)**.** Define $\mathbb{Z}_q \coloneqq \{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots, q - 1\}$.

We define a binary operation of two integers on mod of q:

$$\bullet : \mathbb{Z}_q \times \mathbb{Z}_q \to \mathbb{Z}_q, \quad (p, p') \mapsto p \bullet p' \coloneqq (p + p') \bmod q.$$

For $q = 4$,

$$0 \bullet 1 = (0 + 1) \bmod 4 = 1,$$
$$1 \bullet 2 = (1 + 2) \bmod 4 = 3,$$
$$2 \bullet 3 = (2 + 3) \bmod 4 = 1,$$

to show the rest of operations we can use a table as such:

$\bullet$	0	1	2	3
0	0	1	2	3
1	1	2	3	0
2	2	3	0	1
3	3	0	1	2

From the table, it is clear that $p \bullet p' = p' \bullet p$ for all $p \in \mathbb{Z}_q$, therefore $(\mathbb{Z}_q, \bullet)$ is an abelian group. The neutral element is 0 and the inverse of p is $(4 - p)$.

Group Homomorphism

In Example 2.19 and Example 2.22 we saw two different groups which are structurally similar. If you replace the elements of one group with the elements of the other group in the tables in a particular way, the tables remain unchanged. This means that the two groups have the same structure, formally we say that they are "isomorphic".

Definition 2.23 (Homomorphism)**.** Let $(G, \bullet)$ and $(H, \star)$ be groups with a *priori* independent group operations. A map $\psi : G \to H$, $a \mapsto \psi(a)$ is a **group homomorphism** if for all $a, b \in G$, we have:

$$\psi(a \bullet b) = \psi(a) \star \psi(b). \tag{5}$$

Example 2.24. Let $(G, \bullet) = (H, \star) = (\mathbb{Z}, +)$. A map $\psi : G \to H$, $n \mapsto \psi(n) = 2n$ is a group homomorphism since for all $m, n \in \mathbb{Z}$:

$$\psi(n+m) = 2(n+m) \leftrightarrow \psi(n) + \psi(m) = 2n + 2m.$$

However, the map $\phi : G \to H$, $n \mapsto \phi(n) = 2n^2$ is not a group homomorphism since for all $m, n \in \mathbb{Z}$:

$$\phi(n+m) = 2(n+m)^2 \text{ is not equal to } \phi(n) + \phi(m) = 2n^2 + 2m^2.$$

Definition 2.25 (Isomorphism)**.** A map $\psi : G \to H$, is called a **group isomorphism** if it is a bijective homomorphism. We indicate it by $G \cong H$. Two isomorphic groups are essentially the same group.

Example 2.26. In Example 2.19 and Example 2.22, we have $(R_{90}, \bullet) \cong (\mathbb{Z}_4, \bullet)$. Since, we have a one-to-one correspondence such as $r(0) \leftrightarrow 0$, $r(90) \leftrightarrow 1$, $r(180) \leftrightarrow 2$, $r(270) \leftrightarrow 3$.

Permutation Group

Permutations of n distinct objects forms an important finite group, the **permutation group** or **symmetric group** S_n, containing all the $n!$ possible permutations of n objects.

Example 2.27 (Four numbered balls)**.** Consider the permutations P of four numbered balls $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$. One possible permutation is to change $1 \mapsto 4$, $2 \mapsto 2$, $3 \mapsto 1$, $4 \mapsto 3$. We denote this permutation as $[4213] : (1, 2, 3, 4) \mapsto (4, 2, 1, 3)$.

The set of all possible permutations P forms the group S_4 with the group operation is a composition of two permutations which are applied successively. For example, let $P = [4213]$ and $P' = [2134]$, then the composition $P'' = P' \circ P$ is given by:

$$(1, 2, 3, 4) \xrightarrow{P} (4, 2, 1, 3) \xrightarrow{P'} (4, 1, 2, 3), \quad [4123] = [2134] \circ [4213],$$

$$(1, 2, 3, 4) \xrightarrow{P'} (2, 1, 3, 4) \xrightarrow{P} (2, 4, 1, 3), \quad [2413] = [4213] \circ [2134].$$

It must be obvious that permutation groups S_n (except S_2) are non-abelian.

2.3 Fields

Adding more structure to groups, we arrive at the concept of fields. These are the structures where two operations, addition and multiplication are allowed.

Field axioms

Definition 2.28 (Field)**.** A (number) **field** is a triple $\mathbb{F} := (A, +, \cdot)$, consisting of a set A and two composition rules, addition and multiplication. Fields have the following properties:

- **Addition**$(A, +)$: forms an abelian group, with neutral element 0. Additive inverse of $a = -a$, addition of inverse is called **subtraction**, $a - b := a + (-b)$.
- **Multiplication**$(A \backslash \{0\}, \cdot)$: forms an abelian group, with neutral element 1. Multiplicative inverse of $a = a^{-1}$, multiplication of inverse is called **division**, $a \div b := a \cdot (b^{-1})$.
- For the neutral element of addition 0,
$$0 \cdot a := 0, \ \forall a \in A. \tag{6}$$
- Multiplicative inverse of 0 does not exist. If it did, we would have: $0^{-1} \cdot 0 \cdot a = 0^{-1} \cdot 0 \Rightarrow a = 1, \ \forall a \in A$.
- **Distributivity axiom**:
$$a \cdot (b + c) = a \cdot b + a \cdot c. \tag{7}$$

Just like groups, it is possible to construct fields of finite sets, the **Galois fields**. However, most important fields for physics are infinite — rational numbers, real numbers and complex numbers.

The Real field

The integers, $\mathbb{Z}$, do not form a field (they rather form a **ring**, a structure which allows addition, subtraction and multiplication but not division[2]) because there are no multiplicative inverses for non-zero integers in $\mathbb{Z}$.

Definition 2.29 (Rational numbers)**.** The **rational numbers** are the simplest for of infinite field.
$$\mathbb{Q} := \left\{ \frac{q}{p} \mid q, p \in \mathbb{Z}, p \neq 0 \right\}. \tag{8}$$

Another type of numbers are the **irrational numbers**, the numbers that can't be put in the $\frac{q}{p}$ form.

Example 2.30 (Irrational numbers)**.** $\mathbb{Q} \not\ni \sqrt{2} \simeq 1.4142... \simeq \frac{14142}{10000}$ is an irrational number.

Definition 2.31 (Real field)**.** The **real numbers** $\mathbb{R}$, contain all the rational and irrational numbers. The real numbers form a continuous line. The **real field** is then defined as the triple $(\mathbb{R}, +, \cdot)$.

[2] See Section 2.1 of *Linear Algebra I*

The Complex field

The idea of complex numbers is usually introduced as a remedy for closure of real numbers under the square root operation, such as the solutions of equations like $x^2 + 1 = 0$.

Definition 2.32 (Imaginary unit)**.** The object, $i \notin \mathbb{R}$ called the **imaginary unit** is defined as a number whose square-1 gives -1, $i^2 = -1$.

$$i \coloneqq \sqrt{-1}. \tag{9}$$

Definition 2.33 (Imaginary numbers)**.** The square roots of negative numbers called **imaginary numbers** can be defined as,

$$r > 0 : \ \sqrt{-r} \coloneqq \sqrt{-1}\sqrt{r} = i\sqrt{r} \tag{10}$$

Definition 2.34 (Complex field)**.** The **complex numbers** is the set,

$$\mathbb{C} \coloneqq \{z = x + iy | \ x, y \in \mathbb{R}\} \tag{11}$$

$x \coloneqq \Re(z)$ is the **real part**, and $y \coloneqq \Im(z)$ is the **imaginary part** of z.

Assuming the ordinary rules of arithmetic apply to complex numbers, we define the addition and multiplication of complex numbers.

Theorem 2.35 (Addition of complex numbers)**.**

$$z + z' = (x + iy) + (x' + iy') \coloneqq (x + x') + i(y + y'). \tag{12}$$

Theorem 2.36 (Multiplication of complex numbers)**.**

$$zz' = (x + iy)(x' + iy') \coloneqq (xx' - yy') + i(xy' + yx'). \tag{13}$$

Remark 2.37. Neutral element under addition is 0 and the additive inverse for all z is $-z = -x - iy$. Neutral element under multiplication is 1 and the multiplicative inverse for all $z \neq 0$ is defined using the complex conjugate.

Definition 2.38 (Complex conjugate)**.** The **complex conjugate** of $z = x + iy$,

$$z^* \coloneqq \bar{z} \coloneqq x - iy. \tag{14}$$

This yields

$$z\bar{z} = x^2 + y^2. \tag{15}$$

Therfore, $z\bar{z} \in \mathbb{R}$ and $z\bar{z} \geq 0$ (non-zero if $z \neq 0$).

We know that, $\frac{z\bar{z}}{x^2+y^2} = z \cdot \frac{\bar{z}}{x^2+y^2} = 1$. So, using this we can define the inverse of a complex number, z^{-1}.

Definition 2.39 (Inverse of a complex number)**.** For any $z = x + iy$, it's **inverse** is given vy the rational function,

$$\boxed{z^{-1} \coloneqq \frac{\bar{z}}{x^2+y^2} = \frac{x-iy}{x^2+y^2}, \ \Re(z^{-1}) = \frac{x}{x^2+y^2}, \ \Im(z^{-1}) = \frac{-y}{x^2+y^2}.} \tag{16}$$

Example 2.40 (Inverse of complex numbers)**.** For $z = 3 - 2i$,

$$z^{-1} = \frac{3-2i}{3^2+4^2} = \frac{3}{25} - \frac{2i}{25}.$$

A complex number can be identified with a "ordered pair" of two real numbers on the **complex plane**:

$$I : \mathbb{C} \to \mathbb{R}^2 = \{(x,y)|\ x,y \in \mathbb{R}\}, \tag{17}$$

$$z \mapsto (x,y) = \text{a point in two dimensional complex plane.} \tag{18}$$

Here, $\Re(z) = x$ is the **real axis**, and $\Im(z) = iy$ is the **imaginary axis**. The **polar representation** of complex numbers is useful for such purposes. The length of the line connecting $(0,0)$ and (x,y) on the complex plane is given by the **modulus**:

$$|z| \coloneqq \sqrt{z\bar{z}} = \sqrt{x^2+y^2}. \tag{19}$$

the angle of the line from the real axis is given by its **argument**:

$$\arg(z) \coloneqq \phi = \arctan\left(\frac{\Im(z)}{\Re(z)}\right). \tag{20}$$

By using these, we define the polar form as:

$$z \coloneqq |z|(\cos\phi + i\sin\phi). \tag{21}$$

3 Vector Spaces

In school, we are taught that physical quantites can be divided into scalars (numbers of a field) such as kinetic energy, mass, temperature, volume of a body and vectors such as momentum, velocity, force. Vectors are introduces as arrows with a magnitute and a direction. However, some quantites which seem to be a vector (like torque) aren't actually vectors. Vectors are much more than just arrows in three-dimensional space.

This chapter introduces the general theory of vector spaces which is motivated by the generalised perspective of vectors algebraically since often times in physics we encounter vectors that don't have obvious geometric interpretations.

3.1 General vector spaces

We define vectors algebraically as objects that can be added to each other and multiplied by elements of a number field $\mathbb{F}$.

Definition 3.1 (Vector space)**.** An $\mathbb{F}$-**vector space** is a triple $(V, +, \cdot)$ of a set V, and two composition rules, **vector addition**:

$$+ : V \times V \to V,\ (\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}) \mapsto (\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) \coloneqq \mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}. \tag{22}$$

and **scalar multiplication**:

$$\cdot : \mathbb{F} \times V \to V,\ (a, \mathbf{v}) \mapsto a \cdot \mathbf{v} \coloneqq a\mathbf{v}. \tag{23}$$

such that the following **vector space axioms** hold:
I. $(V, +)$ is an abelian group. It holds, $\forall \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w} \in V$,

1. Closure: $(\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) \in V$.
2. Associativity: $(\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) + \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{u} + (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w})$.
3. Neutral element (**null vector**): $\mathbf{0}$.
4. Inverse of $\mathbf{v}$: $-\mathbf{v}$.
5. Commutativity: $\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{v} + \mathbf{u}$.

II. Scalar multiplication satisfy the following rules. $\forall a, b \in \mathbb{F}, \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in V$,

1. Distributivity over scalar addition: $(a + b)\mathbf{v} = a\mathbf{v} + b\mathbf{v}$.
2. Distributivity over vector addition: $a \cdot (\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) = a\mathbf{u} + a\mathbf{v}$.
3. Associativity over scalar multiplication: $(ab) \cdot \mathbf{v} = a(b\mathbf{v})$.
4. Neutral element: for $1 \in \mathbb{F}$, $1 \cdot \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{v}$.

Remark 3.2. The general definition of a vector space does not make references to "components" or "dimensions" of vectors. These are secondary characteristics that must be derived from the general definition.

Remark 3.3. For $a, b, c \in \mathbb{F}$, $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w} \in V$, $a\mathrm{v} + b\mathbf{u} \in V$, and $a\mathrm{v} + b\mathbf{u} + c\mathbf{w} \in V$. Expressions like these are called **linear combinations** of vectors.

Remark 3.4. Sets fulfilling the above criteria are generally called "spaces", spaces of functions, spaces of matrices, etc. The smallest possible space is the **null space**, $\{\mathbf{0}\}$.

3.2 Standard vector space $\mathbb{R}^n$

As a concrete examples of vector spaces, we now discuss the higher dimensional generalisation of the familiar real vector space, the **standard vector space** $\mathbb{R}^n$.

$$\mathbb{R}^n \coloneqq \left\{ \mathbf{x} \coloneqq \begin{pmatrix} x^1 \\ x^2 \\ \vdots \\ x^n \end{pmatrix} \middle| \; x^1, x^2, \dots, x^n \in \mathbb{R} \right\} \tag{24}$$

Remark 3.5 (Component vector)**.** The elements of $\mathbb{R}^n$ are **n-component vectors**, their i-th component[3] $(\mathbf{x})^i \coloneqq x^i$, where $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$. We introduced the **column notation** of component vectors in Equation 24, oftentimes we use the in-line or the **row notation**, $\mathbf{x} \coloneqq (x^1, x^2, \dots, x^n)^{\mathrm{T}}$, where "T" is the "transpose" of the matrix, and n is the "dimension" of $\mathbb{R}^n$.

Remark 3.6 (Sum of component vectors)**.** Addition of two vectors, $\mathbf{z} = \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}$ can be done by the sum of their components, $z^i = x^i + y^i$.

$$\boxed{+ : \mathbb{R}^n \times \mathbb{R}^n \to \mathbb{R}^n, \; (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}) \mapsto (\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}) \coloneqq \begin{pmatrix} x^1 + y^1 \\ x^2 + y^2 \\ \vdots \\ x^n + y^n \end{pmatrix}} \tag{25}$$

Example 3.7 (Adding component vectors)**.** In $\mathbb{R}^3$,

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -1 \\ 3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1+2 \\ 2+(-1) \\ 5+3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 8 \end{pmatrix}$$

Remark 3.8 (Scalar multiplication of component vector)**.** Multiplication of a vector $\mathbf{x}$ with a scalar λ, $\mathbf{x}' = \lambda \cdot \mathbf{x}$ can be defined component-wise as $(\lambda \mathbf{x})^i = \lambda x^i$.

$$\boxed{\cdot : \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}^n \to \mathbb{R}^n, \; (\lambda, \mathbf{x}) \mapsto (\lambda \mathbf{x}) \coloneqq \begin{pmatrix} \lambda x^1 \\ \lambda x^2 \\ \vdots \\ \lambda x^n \end{pmatrix}} \tag{26}$$

Example 3.9 (Scaling component vectors)**.** In $\mathbb{R}^3$,

$$3 \cdot \begin{pmatrix} -1 \\ 2 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \cdot (-1) \\ 3 \cdot 2 \\ 3 \cdot 5 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 6 \\ 15 \end{pmatrix}$$

Note that vector multiplication has not been defined yet as we need *inner product*. Division of vectors is not possible since there is not multiplicative inverse.

The standard vector space $\mathbb{R}^n$ is just one of the many vector spaces encountered in physics. One of the most important spaces in quantum mechanics is the infinite-dimensional function space — *Hilbert space*.

[3] We use superscripts instead of subscripts for components because of *covariant notation*, see Section 3.4.

3.3 Examples of vector spaces

We now introduce more examples of vector spaces that are important for theoretical physics.

Example 3.10 (Standard vector spaces)**.** For the three number fields,

- Rational numbers: $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{Q}$: $\mathbf{q} \coloneqq (q^1, \ldots, q^n)^{\mathrm{T}} \in \mathbb{Q}^n$.
- Real numbers: $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{R}$: $\mathbf{r} \coloneqq (r^1, \ldots, r^n)^{\mathrm{T}} \in \mathbb{R}^n$.
- Complex numbers: $\mathbb{F} = \mathbb{C}$: $\mathbf{z} \coloneqq (z^1, \ldots, z^n)^{\mathrm{T}} \in \mathbb{C}^n$.

Remark 3.11. Note that in the **complex standard vector space** $\mathbb{C}^n$, the components $z^j = x^j + iy^j$ are more "complicated" than in rational or real vector spaces.

Affine and Euclidean spaces

We will now consider the geometrically familiar flat Euclidean space.

Definition 3.12 (Affine space)**.** An **affine space** $\mathcal{A}$ over a field $\mathbb{F}$ is a triple $(P, V, +)$, consisting of a set P, whose elements are called **points**, a vector space V over $\mathbb{F}$ and a mapping:

$$+ : P \times V \to P, \quad (p, \mathbf{v}) \mapsto p + \mathbf{v} = q, \tag{27}$$

such that the following axioms are satisfied:

1. $\forall p \in P,\ p + 0_V = p$.
2. $\forall p \in P,\ \forall \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w} \in V,\ (p + \mathbf{v}) + \mathbf{w} = p + (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w})$.
3. $\forall p \in P\ \forall \mathbf{v} \in V\ \exists! q \in P:\ \mathbf{v} = \vec{pq}$.
4. $\forall p, q, r \in P,\ \vec{pq} + \vec{qr} = \vec{pr}$.
5. $\mathrm{Dim}(A) = \mathrm{Dim}(V)$.

Remark 3.13. Here, 0_V is the null vector in V, addition of this vector to any point does nothing as expected. An affine space is not exactly a vector space because we don't have a null vector, hence no additive inverses. However, by choosing an arbitrary point (origin) $O \in P$, we can assign unique **position vectors** $\vec{Or}$ to each point $r \in P$. We therefore regard V as a space of position vectors of P relative to O, then the vector space is sometimes written as $V = (A, O)$.

Remark 3.14. The mapping $+$ is a different kind of addition as it doesn't apply to two vectors, rather it is translation of a point with a vector. It could be thought of as starting from a point p and joining it with another point q with a unique vector $\vec{pq} = \mathbf{v}$. The vector $\mathbf{v}$ is sometimes called the *difference vector* for the pair (p, q), since we never add two points but their difference gives us the vector.

Remark 3.15 (Dimensions)**.** The last axiom makes use of "Dim", which will only be defined in next section, can be intuitively thought of as the dimensions of the spaces.

Remark 3.16 (Euclidean space)**.** The familiar d-dimensional **Euclidean space** is an example of an affine space $A \coloneqq \mathbb{E}^d$ when $V = \mathbb{R}^d$. This is the flat-space in which we live in (without relativistic effects), by choosing a suitable reference frame (origin) O we get the real standard vector space $\mathbb{R}^d = (\mathbb{E}^d, O)$.

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