

# Lattice: A Brief Introduction

Debadatta Kar  
Cryptography Research Lab  
Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal

July 10, 2025

## Lecture 1

### 1 Introduction

Security of any cryptographic protocol relies on a hard mathematical problem that is infeasible to break by any existing computer. For many of the problems used in cryptography, no proof of a known computational algorithm exists that ensures its security. Lattices have been used in cryptography to serve the same purpose, i.e a computationally hard-to-solve problem used to keep things secure. The purpose of introducing lattices in cryptography was primarily for demonstrating/exploiting weaknesses in cryptosystems. Later on, it turned out to be useful for developing alternative forms of public-key cryptography. As of now, when the world approaches the era of Quantum Computers, where the widely used cryptosystems are under threat, the hope comes in the form of lattices, which were previously kept as an alternative. The domain lattice-based cryptography has sped up, and frequently, research articles on lattice-based cryptography are published. Lattice problems look to be good candidates that would be resistant to quantum computer attacks. In this article, we will jump into lattices and see their mathematics.

### 2 Lattices

Vaguely, a lattice is a collection of evenly spaced points in space, often in a grid-like pattern. The illustrations below show some lattice structure in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ . Moreover, the **points** Here are the elements of the lattice. In the notion of distance, they are equally spaced.

It is a set of points in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  with periodic structure. We are now going to formally define a lattice in mathematical terms.

**Definition 2.1.** A lattice is a discrete subgroup of  $\mathbb{R}^m$ .

**Definition 2.2.** Let  $B$  be any real  $m \times n$  square matrix over the real field. The set of vectors from  $\mathbb{R}^m$  that can be written as  $v = Ba$  where  $a$  is a vector of integers and of dimension  $m$ , is called a lattice and is denoted by  $\Lambda$ .

$$\Lambda := \left\{ v = \sum_{i=1}^n a_i b_i \mid a_i \in \mathbb{Z} \right\}$$

where  $b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n$  are linearly independent vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^m$ . Here,  $n$  is called the dimension of the lattice and  $m$  is called the rank of the basis. Each  $b_i$  can be looked up as columns of the matrix  $B$ , which has components  $b_{ij}$ .

More concisely, we can express it as

$$\Lambda = \{v = Ba \mid a \in \mathbb{Z}^n\}$$

and then we say  $B$  is the generator matrix for the lattice.

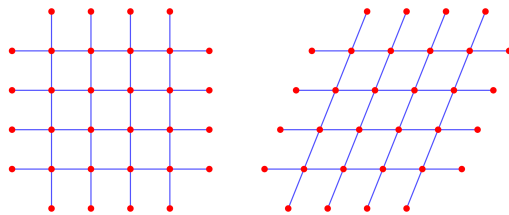


Figure 1: Lattice

### 3 Examples

**Example 3.1.**  $\Lambda_1 = \mathbb{Z}^2$  is a lattice of dimension 2.

$B = \{(1, 0), (0, 1)\} = \{b_1, b_2\}$  is a basis for  $\mathbb{Z}^2$ .

$$\Lambda_1 = \{\alpha_1 b_1 + \alpha_2 b_2 \mid \alpha_1, \alpha_2 \in \mathbb{Z}\}$$

**Example 3.2.**  $\Lambda_2 = 2\mathbb{Z}^2$  is a lattice of dimension 2, and it is a sub-lattice of  $\Lambda_1$ .

A lattice can have multiple bases.

$B' = \{(2, 0), (0, 2)\} = \{b'_1, b'_2\}$  is a basis for  $2\mathbb{Z}^2$ .

$C' = \{(-2, 0), (0, 2)\} = \{c'_1, c'_2\}$  is also a basis for  $2\mathbb{Z}^2$ .

Moreover, two different bases can either generate the same lattice or different lattices. Sometimes, two different bases generate lattices such that one is contained in another, in such case we would say that the one that is contained in the other is a sub-lattice.

Observe that  $B'$  is not a basis for  $\Lambda_1$ . Also  $\Lambda_2$  is a sublattice of  $\Lambda_1$ .

### 4 More on Lattices

- 0 is an element of the lattice, we also call it the origin of the lattice.
- All elements of the lattice are generated by the linear combination of basis vectors, where the coefficients are taken from  $\mathbb{Z}$
- We can think of it as a subset of  $\mathbb{R}^m$  with each point placed in an even setup of distance.
- The basis set of a lattice need not be **unique**!!

Some quick remarks about lattices and bases.

- A lattice is of full rank if the generator matrix  $B$  is of full rank ( $m = n$ ).
- Every non-singular matrix (**square matrix having determinant non-zero**) corresponds to some lattice of full rank

**Definition 4.1.** A matrix  $U \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$  is called unimodular if  $\det(U) = \pm 1$

For example  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 2 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$  is unimodular.

**Lemma 4.2.** If  $U$  is unimodular so is  $U^{-1}$  and in particular  $U^{-1} \in \mathbb{Z}^{n \times n}$

**Theorem 4.3.** Two bases  $B_1$  and  $B_2$  generate the same lattice  $\Lambda$  iff they are related by  $B_2 = B_1 A$ , where  $A$  is an unimodular matrix.

*Proof.* Assume that  $\mathcal{L}(B_1) = \mathcal{L}(B_2)$ . For each column  $b_i$  of  $B_2$  we have  $b_i \in \mathcal{L}(B_1)$ . This implies the existence of an integer matrix  $U$  such that  $B_2 = B_1 U$ . Similarly,  $B_1 = B_2 V$  for some integer matrix  $V$ .

Hence,

$$B_2 = B_1 U = B_2 V U$$

And now,

$$B_2^T B_2 = (B_2 V U)^T B_2 V U = (V U)^T B_2^T B_2 V U$$

Now, on computing the determinant, we get,

$$\det(B_2^T B_2) = \det((V U)^T B_2^T B_2 V U)$$

Using the properties of determinant, we get,

$$\det(B_2)^2 = \det(V U)^2 \det(B_2)^2$$

This gives that,

$$\det(V)^2 \det(U)^2 = 1$$

Here, both the determinant values are integer type. So, the only possibility is  $\det(U) = \pm 1$  and  $\det(V) = \pm 1$

□

**Definition 4.4.** For any lattice basis  $B$  we define

$$\mathcal{P}(B) = \{Bx | x \in \mathbb{R}^n, \forall i : 0 \leq x_i < 1\}$$

This is called the fundamental parallelepiped.

**Definition 4.5.** Let  $\Lambda = \mathcal{L}(B)$  be a lattice of rank  $n$ . Then the determinant of the lattice is defined as the volume of the fundamental parallelepiped  $\mathcal{P}(B)$  of  $n$  dimensions.

$$\det(\Lambda) = \left| \sqrt{\det(BB^T)} \right|$$

## 5 Gram-Schmidt Orthogonalization

The Gram-Schmidt process in itself can be covered in an article. It serves as an algorithm to construct a set of orthogonal bases from a set of linearly independent vectors in a vector space. Let  $v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n$  be  $n$  linearly independent vector spaces.

$b_1 = \frac{v_1}{\|v_1\|}$  which is a unit vector in the direction of  $v_1$ .

$$b_2 = v_2 - \text{proj}_{b_1}(v_2)$$

$$b_3 = v_3 - \text{proj}_{b_1}(v_3) - \text{proj}_{b_2}(v_3)$$

$\vdots$

$$b_n = v_n - \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \text{proj}_{b_i}(v_n)$$

Now,  $b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n$  are the required orthonormal vectors that can be normalised by dividing them by their corresponding lengths to get the orthonormal vectors.

The projection of a vector  $u$  on a vector  $v$  is given by

$$\text{proj}_u(v) = \frac{\langle u, v \rangle}{\langle v, v \rangle} v$$

More from Gram-Schmidt orthogonalisation. If  $b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n$  be linearly independent and  $b_1^*, b_2^*, \dots, b_n^*$  is the Gram-Schmidt orthogonal basis then

- $\langle b_i^*, b_j^* \rangle = 0$  whenever  $i \neq j$ . This is what orthogonalisation does, it helps to get a zero inner product.
- $\langle b_i^*, b_j^* \rangle = 0$  whenever  $i < j$ . This is a useful relation to be used in the next article.
- We can generate orthonormal vectors by scaling the orthonormal vectors as unit vectors. More precisely  $\hat{b}_i^* = \frac{b_i^*}{\|b_i^*\|}$ .

**Definition 5.1.** A set  $S$  is called convex if  $\forall x \neq y$  and  $x, y \in S$  we have  $\alpha x + (1 - \alpha)y \in S$  for all  $\alpha \in [0, 1]$

**Definition 5.2.** A set  $S$  is called centrally symmetric if  $\forall x \in S$  we have  $-x \in S$ .

In the next article, we will intensively use the definitions and results noted in this article.

## References

- [1] Oded Regev, *Lecture notes of Lattices in Computer Science Course*, Tel Aviv University; Fall 2009
- [2] Vinod Vaikuntanathan, *Lecture notes of Advanced Topics in Cryptography: From Lattices to Program Obfuscation Course*, MIT; Fall 2024