# 8

## Systems of Linear First-Order Differential Equations

**\equiv Linear Systems** When each of the functions  $g_1, g_2, \ldots, g_n$  in (2) is linear in the dependent variables  $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n$ , we get the **normal form** of a first-orde system of linear equations:

$$\frac{dx_1}{dt} = a_{11}(t)x_1 + a_{12}(t)x_2 + \dots + a_{1n}(t)x_n + f_1(t)$$

$$\frac{dx_2}{dt} = a_{21}(t)x_1 + a_{22}(t)x_2 + \dots + a_{2n}(t)x_n + f_2(t)$$

$$\vdots$$

$$\frac{dx_n}{dt} = a_{n1}(t)x_1 + a_{n2}(t)x_2 + \dots + a_{nn}(t)x_n + f_n(t).$$
(3)

 $\blacksquare$  Matrix Form of a Linear System If X, A(t), and F(t) denote the respective matrices

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} x_{1}(t) \\ x_{2}(t) \\ \vdots \\ x_{n}(t) \end{pmatrix}, \qquad \mathbf{A}(t) = \begin{pmatrix} a_{11}(t) & a_{12}(t) & \cdots & a_{1n}(t) \\ a_{21}(t) & a_{22}(t) & \cdots & a_{2n}(t) \\ \vdots & & & \vdots \\ a_{n1}(t) & a_{n2}(t) & \cdots & a_{nn}(t) \end{pmatrix}, \qquad \mathbf{F}(t) = \begin{pmatrix} f_{1}(t) \\ f_{2}(t) \\ \vdots \\ f_{n}(t) \end{pmatrix},$$

then the system of linear first-order di ferential equations (3) can be written as

$$\frac{d}{dt} \begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ \vdots \\ x_n \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a_{11}(t) & a_{12}(t) & \cdots & a_{1n}(t) \\ a_{21}(t) & a_{22}(t) & \cdots & a_{2n}(t) \\ \vdots & & & \vdots \\ a_{n1}(t) & a_{n2}(t) & \cdots & a_{nn}(t) \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ \vdots \\ x_n \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} f_1(t) \\ f_2(t) \\ \vdots \\ f_n(t) \end{pmatrix}$$

or simply X' = AX + F. (4)

If the system is homogeneous, its matrix form is then

$$\mathbf{X}' = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X}.\tag{5}$$

#### **DEFINITION 8.1.1** Solution Vector

A solution vector on an interval I is any column matrix

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} x_1(t) \\ x_2(t) \\ \vdots \\ x_n(t) \end{pmatrix}$$

whose entries are differentiable functions satisfying the system (4) on the interval.

#### THEOREM 8.1.1 Existence of a Unique Solution

Let the entries of the matrices A(t) and F(t) be functions continuous on a common interval I that contains the point  $t_0$ . Then there exists a unique solution of the initial-value problem (7) on the interval.

#### **THEOREM 8.1.2** Superposition Principle

Let  $X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_k$  be a set of solution vectors of the homogeneous system (5) on an interval I. Then the linear combination

$$\mathbf{X} = c_1 \mathbf{X}_1 + c_2 \mathbf{X}_2 + \cdots + c_k \mathbf{X}_k,$$

where the  $c_i$ , i = 1, 2, ..., k are arbitrary constants, is also a solution on the interval.

#### **DEFINITION 8.1.2** Linear Dependence/Independence

Let  $X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_k$  be a set of solution vectors of the homogeneous system (5) on an interval I. We say that the set is linearly dependent on the interval if there exist constants  $c_1, c_2, \ldots, c_k$ , not all zero, such that

$$c_1\mathbf{X}_1 + c_2\mathbf{X}_2 + \cdots + c_k\mathbf{X}_k = \mathbf{0}$$

for every *t* in the interval. If the set of vectors is not linearly dependent on the interval, it is said to be linearly independent.

be n solution vectors of the homogeneous system (5) on an interval I. Then the set of solution vectors is linearly independent on I if and only if the Wronskian

$$W(\mathbf{X}_{1}, \mathbf{X}_{2}, \dots, \mathbf{X}_{n}) = \begin{vmatrix} x_{11} & x_{12} & \dots & x_{1n} \\ x_{21} & x_{22} & \dots & x_{2n} \\ \vdots & & & \vdots \\ x_{n1} & x_{n2} & \dots & x_{nn} \end{vmatrix} \neq 0$$
 (9)

for every t in the interval.

#### THEOREM 8.1.6 General Solution—Nonhomogeneous Systems

Let  $X_p$  be a given solution of the nonhomogeneous system (4) on an interval I and let

$$\mathbf{X}_c = c_1 \mathbf{X}_1 + c_2 \mathbf{X}_2 + \cdots + c_n \mathbf{X}_n$$

denote the general solution on the same interval of the associated homogeneous system (5). Then the general solution of the nonhomogeneous system on the interval is

$$\mathbf{X} = \mathbf{X}_c + \mathbf{X}_p$$

The general solution  $X_c$  of the associated homogeneous system (5) is called the complementary function of the nonhomogeneous system (4).

## 8.2 HOMOGENEOUS LINEAR SYSTEMS

where  $k_1$ ,  $k_2$ ,  $\lambda_1$ , and  $\lambda_2$  are constants, we are prompted to ask whether we can always find a solution of the form

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} k_1 \\ k_2 \\ \vdots \\ k_n \end{pmatrix} e^{\lambda t} = \mathbf{K} e^{\lambda t} \tag{1}$$

for the general homogeneous linear first-order syste

$$\mathbf{X}' = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{X},\tag{2}$$

where A is an  $n \times n$  matrix of constants.

Eigenvalues and Eigenvectors If (1) is to be a solution vector of the homogeneous linear system (2), then  $X' = K\lambda e^{\lambda t}$ , so the system becomes  $K\lambda e^{\lambda t} = AKe^{\lambda t}$ . After dividing out  $e^{\lambda t}$  and rearranging, we obtain  $AK = \lambda K$  or  $AK - \lambda K = 0$ . Since K = IK, the last equation is the same as

$$(\mathbf{A} - \mathbf{I})\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{0}. (3)$$

The matrix equation (3) is equivalent to the simultaneous algebraic equations

$$(a_{11} - \lambda)k_1 + a_{12}k_2 + \cdots + a_{1n}k_n = 0$$

$$a_{21}k_1 + (a_{22} - \lambda)k_2 + \cdots + a_{2n}k_n = 0$$

$$\vdots$$

$$a_{n1}k_1 + a_{n2}k_2 + \cdots + (a_{nn} - \lambda)k_n = 0$$

Thus to find a nontrivial solution X of (2), we must first find a nontrivial solution of the foregoing system; in other words, we must find a nontrivial vector K that satisfies (3). But for (3) to have solutions other than the obvious solution  $k_1 = k_2 = \cdots = k_n = 0$ , we must have

$$\det(\mathbf{A} - \mathbf{I}) = 0.$$

This polynomial equation in  $\lambda$  is called the characteristic equation of the matrix A; its solutions are the eigenvalues of A. A solution  $K \neq 0$  of (3) corresponding to an eigenvalue  $\lambda$  is called an eigenvector of A. A solution of the homogeneous system (2) is then  $X = Ke^{\lambda t}$ .

## 8.2.1 DISTINCT REAL EIGENVALUES

#### THEOREM 8.2.1 General Solution—Homogeneous Systems

Let  $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \ldots, \lambda_n$  be n distinct real eigenvalues of the coefficient matrix A of the homogeneous system (2) and let  $K_1, K_2, \ldots, K_n$  be the corresponding eigenvectors. Then the general solution of (2) on the interval  $(-\infty, \infty)$  is given by

$$\mathbf{X} = c_1 \mathbf{K}_1 e^{-t} + c_2 \mathbf{K}_2 e^{-2t} + \cdots + c_n \mathbf{K}_n e^{-st}.$$

#### EXAMPLE 1 Distinct Eigenvalues

Solve

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = 2x + 3y$$

$$\frac{dy}{dt} = 2x + y.$$
(4)

$$\det(\mathbf{A} - \mathbf{I}) = \begin{vmatrix} 2 - & 3 \\ 2 & 1 - \end{vmatrix} = ^2 - 3 - 4 = ( + 1)( - 4) = 0$$

we see that the eigenvalues are  $\lambda_1 = -1$  and  $\lambda_2 = 4$ .

Now for  $\lambda_1 = -1$ , (3) is equivalent to

$$3k_1 + 3k_2 = 0$$

$$2k_1 + 2k_2 = 0.$$

Thus  $k_1 = -k_2$ . When  $k_2 = -1$ , the related eigenvector is

$$\mathbf{K}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}$$
.

For 2 = 4 we have

$$-2k_1 + 3k_2 = 0$$

$$2k_1 - 3k_2 = 0$$

so  $k_1 = \frac{3}{2}k_2$ ; therefore with  $k_2 = 2$  the corresponding eigenvector is

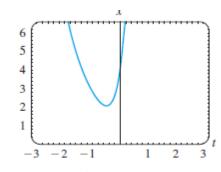
$$\mathbf{K}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$$
.

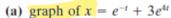
Since the matrix of coefficients A is a  $2 \times 2$  matrix and since we have found two linearly independent solutions of (4),

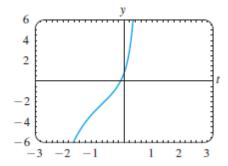
$$\mathbf{X}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} e^{-t}$$
 and  $\mathbf{X}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} e^{4t}$ ,

we conclude that the general solution of the system is

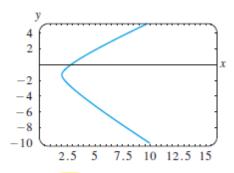
$$\mathbf{X} = c_1 \mathbf{X}_1 + c_2 \mathbf{X}_2 = c_1 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} e^{-t} + c_2 \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} e^{4t}. \tag{5}$$







**(b)** graph of 
$$y = -e^{-t} + 2e^{4t}$$



(c) trajectory define by  $x = e^{-t} + 3e^{4t}$ ,  $y = -e^{-t} + 2e^{4t}$  in the phase plane

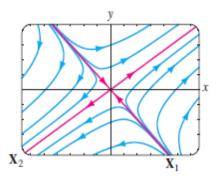


FIGURE 8.2.2 A phase portrait of system (4)

Korcotch on the Floor

## 8.2.2 REPEATED EIGENVALUES

In general, it *m* is a positive integer and  $(\lambda - \lambda_1)^m$  is a factor of the characteristic equation while  $(\lambda - \lambda_1)^{m+1}$  is not a factor, then  $\lambda_1$  is said to be an eigenvalue of multiplicity *m*. The next three examples illustrate the following cases:

(i) For some n × n matrices A it may be possible to find m linearly independent eigenvectors K<sub>1</sub>, K<sub>2</sub>, ..., K<sub>m</sub> corresponding to an eigenvalue 1 of multiplicity m n. In this case the general solution of the system contains the linear combination

$$c_1\mathbf{K}_1e^{-t} + c_2\mathbf{K}_2e^{-t} + \cdots + c_m\mathbf{K}_me^{-t}$$

 (ii) If there is only one eigenvector corresponding to the eigenvalue λ<sub>1</sub> of multiplicity m, then m linearly independent solutions of the form

$$\begin{split} \mathbf{X}_{1} &= \mathbf{K}_{11} e^{\lambda_{1} t} \\ \mathbf{X}_{2} &= \mathbf{K}_{21} t e^{\lambda_{1} t} + \mathbf{K}_{22} e^{\lambda_{1} t} \\ &\vdots \\ \mathbf{X}_{m} &= \mathbf{K}_{m1} \frac{t^{m-1}}{(m-1)!} e^{\lambda_{1} t} + \mathbf{K}_{m2} \frac{t^{m-2}}{(m-2)!} e^{\lambda_{1} t} + \cdots + \mathbf{K}_{mm} e^{\lambda_{1} t}, \end{split}$$

where  $K_{ij}$  are column vectors, can always be found.

## **EXAMPLE 4** Repeated Eigenvalues

Find the general solution of the system given in (10).

$$\mathbf{X}' = \begin{pmatrix} 3 & -18 \\ 2 & -9 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{X} \tag{10}$$

 $\equiv$  Second Solution Now suppose that  $\lambda_1$  is an eigenvalue of multiplicity two and that there is only one eigenvector associated with this value. A second solution can be found of the form

$$\mathbf{X}_2 = \mathbf{K} t e^{-t} + \mathbf{P} e^{-t}, \tag{12}$$

where

$$\mathbf{K} = \begin{pmatrix} k_1 \\ k_2 \\ \vdots \\ k_n \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} p_1 \\ p_2 \\ \vdots \\ p_n \end{pmatrix}.$$

To see this, we substitute (12) into the system X' = AX and simplify:

$$(AK - {}_{1}K)te^{-t} + (AP - {}_{1}P - K)e^{-t} = 0.$$

Since this last equation is to hold for all values of t, we must have

$$(A - {}_{1}I)K = 0 \tag{13}$$

and

$$(A - {}_{1}I)P = K. (14)$$

Equation (13) simply states that K must be an eigenvector of A associated with  $\lambda_1$ . By solving (13), we find one solution  $X_1 = Ke^{-t}$ . To find the second solution  $X_2$ , we need only solve the additional system (14) for the vector P.

**SOLUTION** From (11) we know that  $\lambda_1 = -3$  and that one solution is  $\mathbf{X}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{-3t}$ . Identifying  $\mathbf{K} = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$  and  $\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} p_1 \\ p_2 \end{pmatrix}$ , we find from (14) that we must now solve

$$(A + 3I)P = K$$
 or  $6p_1 - 18p_2 = 3$   
 $2p_1 - 6p_2 = 1$ .

Since this system is obviously equivalent to one equation, we have an infinit number of choices for  $p_1$  and  $p_2$ . For example, by choosing  $p_1 = 1$ , we find  $p_2 = \frac{1}{6}$ .

However, for simplicity we shall choose  $p_1 = \frac{1}{2}$  so that  $p_2 = 0$ . Hence  $\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{2} \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ .

Thus from (12) we find  $\mathbf{X}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} t e^{-3t} + \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{2} \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} e^{-3t}$ . The general solution of (10) is then  $\mathbf{X} = c_1 \mathbf{X}_1 + c_2 \mathbf{X}_2$  or

$$\mathbf{X} = c_1 \binom{3}{1} e^{-3t} + c_2 \left[ \binom{3}{1} t e^{-3t} + \binom{\frac{1}{2}}{0} e^{-3t} \right].$$

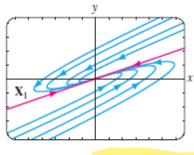


FIGURE 8.2.3 A phase portrait of system (10) Water in the Basin...

## 8.2.3 COMPLEX EIGENVALUES

If  $\lambda_1 = \alpha + \beta i$  and  $\lambda_2 = \alpha - \beta i$ ,  $\beta > 0$ ,  $i^2 = -1$  are complex eigenvalues of the coefficient matrix A, we can then certainly expect their corresponding eigenvectors to also have complex entries.\*

For example, the characteristic equation of the system

$$\frac{dx}{dt} = 6x - y$$

$$\frac{dy}{dt} = 5x + 4y$$
(19)

is

$$\det(\mathbf{A} - \mathbf{I}) = \begin{vmatrix} 6 - & -1 \\ 5 & 4 - \end{vmatrix} = {}^{2} - 10 + 29 = 0.$$

From the quadratic formula we find  $\lambda_1 = 5 + 2i$ ,  $\lambda_2 = 5 - 2i$ .

$$\mathbf{X} = c_1 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 - 2i \end{pmatrix} e^{(5+2i)t} + c_2 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 + 2i \end{pmatrix} e^{(5-2i)t}.$$
 (20)  
$$\mathbf{X} = C_1 \mathbf{X}_1 + C_2 \mathbf{X}_2,$$

where

$$\mathbf{X}_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \cos 2t - \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ -2 \end{bmatrix} \sin 2t e^{5t}$$

and

$$\mathbf{X}_2 = \left[ \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} \cos 2t + \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \sin 2t \right] e^{5t}.$$

 $x = C_1 e^{5t} \cos 2t + C_2 e^{5t} \sin 2t$ 

$$y = (C_1 - 2C_2)e^{5t}\cos 2t + (2C_1 + C_2)e^{5t}\sin 2t.$$

$$x = C_1 e^{5t} \cos 2t + C_2 e^{5t} \sin 2t$$
  

$$y = (C_1 - 2C_2) e^{5t} \cos 2t + (2C_1 + C_2) e^{5t} \sin 2t.$$

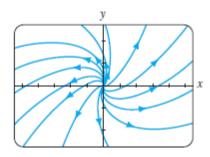


FIGURE 8.2.4 A phase portrait of system (19)

Flow diversing from Tap in the Garden...

#### **EXAMPLE 4** Variation of Parameters

Solve the system

$$\mathbf{X}' = \begin{pmatrix} -3 & 1\\ 2 & -4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{X} + \begin{pmatrix} 3t\\ e^{-t} \end{pmatrix} \tag{11}$$

on  $(-\infty, \infty)$ .

SOLUTION We first solve the associated homogeneous syste

$$\mathbf{X}' = \begin{pmatrix} -3 & 1\\ 2 & -4 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{X}.\tag{12}$$

The characteristic equation of the coefficient matrix i

$$\det(\mathbf{A} - \mathbf{I}) = \begin{vmatrix} -3 - & 1 \\ 2 & -4 - \end{vmatrix} = (+2)(+5) = 0,$$

so the eigenvalues are  $\lambda_1=-2$  and  $\lambda_2=-5$ . By the usual method we find that the eigenvectors corresponding to  $\lambda_1$  and  $\lambda_2$  are, respectively,  $K_1=\begin{pmatrix} 1\\1 \end{pmatrix}$  and  $K_2=\begin{pmatrix} 1\\-2 \end{pmatrix}$ . The solution vectors of the homogeneous system (12) are then

$$\mathbf{X}_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{-2t} = \begin{pmatrix} e^{-2t} \\ e^{-2t} \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{X}_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} e^{-5t} = \begin{pmatrix} e^{-5t} \\ -2e^{-5t} \end{pmatrix}.$$

The entries in  $X_1$  form the first column of  $\Phi(t)$ , and the entries in  $X_2$  form the second column of  $\Phi(t)$ . Hence

$$\Phi(t) = \begin{pmatrix} e^{-2t} & e^{-5t} \\ e^{-2t} & -2e^{-5t} \end{pmatrix} \quad \text{and} \quad \Phi^{-1}(t) = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{2}{3}e^{2t} & \frac{1}{3}e^{2t} \\ \frac{1}{3}e^{5t} & -\frac{1}{3}e^{5t} \end{pmatrix}.$$

From (9) we obtain the particular solution

$$\mathbf{X}_{p} = \mathbf{\Phi}(t) \int \mathbf{\Phi}^{-1}(t) \mathbf{F}(t) dt = \begin{pmatrix} e^{-2t} & e^{-5t} \\ e^{-2t} & -2e^{-5t} \end{pmatrix} \int \begin{pmatrix} \frac{2}{3}e^{2t} & \frac{1}{3}e^{2t} \\ \frac{1}{3}e^{5t} & -\frac{1}{3}e^{5t} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 3t \\ e^{-t} \end{pmatrix} dt$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} e^{-2t} & e^{-5t} \\ e^{-2t} & -2e^{-5t} \end{pmatrix} \int \begin{pmatrix} 2te^{2t} + \frac{1}{3}e^{t} \\ te^{5t} - \frac{1}{3}e^{4t} \end{pmatrix} dt$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} e^{-2t} & e^{-5t} \\ e^{-2t} & -2e^{-5t} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} te^{2t} - \frac{1}{2}e^{2t} + \frac{1}{3}e^{t} \\ \frac{1}{5}te^{5t} - \frac{1}{25}e^{5t} - \frac{1}{12}e^{4t} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} \frac{6}{5}t - \frac{27}{50} + \frac{1}{4}e^{-t} \\ \frac{3}{5}t - \frac{21}{50} + \frac{1}{2}e^{-t} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Hence from (10) the general solution of (11) on the interval is

$$\mathbf{X} = \begin{pmatrix} e^{-2t} & e^{-5t} \\ e^{-2t} & -2e^{-5t} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} c_1 \\ c_2 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \frac{6}{5}t - \frac{27}{50} + \frac{1}{4}e^{-t} \\ \frac{3}{5}t - \frac{21}{50} + \frac{1}{2}e^{-t} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$= c_1 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} e^{-2t} + c_2 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} e^{-5t} + \begin{pmatrix} \frac{6}{5} \\ \frac{3}{5} \end{pmatrix} t - \begin{pmatrix} \frac{27}{50} \\ \frac{21}{50} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \frac{1}{4} \\ \frac{1}{2} \end{pmatrix} e^{-t}.$$

## **EXERCISES 8.3**

#### 8.3.2 VARIATION OF PARAMETERS

In Problems 11-30 use variation of parameters to solve the given system.

11. 
$$\frac{dx}{dt} = 3x - 3y + 4$$
  
 $\frac{dy}{dt} = 2x - 2y - 1$   
12.  $\frac{dx}{dt} = 2x - y$   
 $\frac{dy}{dt} = 3x - 2y + 4t$   
19.  $\mathbf{X}' = \begin{pmatrix} 3 & 2 \\ -2 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{X} + \begin{pmatrix} 2e^{-t} \\ e^{-t} \end{pmatrix}$   
23.  $\mathbf{X}' = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \mathbf{X} + \begin{pmatrix} \cos t \\ \sin t \end{pmatrix} e^{t}$