



Why

Definition

A *hyperplane* in n -dimensional space is an $(n - 1)$ -dimensional affine set.

Since the $n - 1$ -dimensional subspaces are the orthogonal complements of the one-dimensional subspaces, they are the sets which can be specified by

$$\{x \in \mathbf{R}^n \mid x \perp b\}$$

for $b \in \mathbf{R}^n$. The hyperplanes are translates of these,

$$\begin{aligned} \{x \in \mathbf{R}^n \mid x \perp b\} + a &= \{x + a \mid \langle x \rangle b = 0\} \\ &= \{y \mid \langle y - a \rangle b = 0\} = \{y \mid \langle y \rangle b = \beta\}, \end{aligned}$$

where $\beta = \langle a \rangle b$.

Characterization

Prop. 1. $H \subset \mathbf{R}^n$ is a hyperplane if and only if there exists $\beta \in \mathbf{R}$ and nonzero $b \in \mathbf{R}^n$ so that

$$H = \{x \in \mathbf{R}^n \mid \langle x \rangle b = \beta\}.$$

Remark 1. b and β are unique up to a common nonzero multiple. For example, b, β and $2b, 2\beta$ give the same hyperplane.

Remark 2. The vector b is called a normal to the hyperplane.

