Math 311

Chapter 2

Section 2.4: Matrix Inverses

Contents

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Numbers: To solve the equation $2x + 1 = 0$:

$$2x + 1 = 0 \iff 2x = -1 \iff \frac{2x}{2} = -\frac{1}{2} \iff x = -\frac{1}{2}.$$

The number $2^{-1} = \frac{1}{2}$ is called the **inverse** of 2 because $2(2^{-1}) = 1$.

DEFINITION 1. If A is a square matrix, a matrix B is called an **inverse** of A if and only if

$$AB = I \quad \text{and} \quad BA = I.$$

If A has an inverse, then A is called an **invertible matrix**.

EXAMPLE 1. Show that $B = \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ is an inverse of $A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$.

SOLUTION.

$$AB = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = I_2 \checkmark$$

and

$$BA = \begin{bmatrix} -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = I_2 \checkmark$$

EXAMPLE 2. Show that $A = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 3 \end{bmatrix}$ has no inverse.

SOLUTION. Assume $B = \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}$ is an inverse of A.

$\Rightarrow AB = I_2 \Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} c & d \\ 3c & 3d \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

$\Rightarrow c = 1,\ d = 0,\ 3c = 0,\ 3d = 1$

$\Rightarrow c = 1$ and $c = 0$ not possible!

$\Rightarrow A$ has no inverse!

Note: There are non-zero matrices that do not have an inverse!

THEOREM 1. If B and C are both inverses of a matrix A, then $B = C$.

PROOF. Since B and C are both inverses of A, we have $AC = I = CA$ and $AB = I = BA$. Therefore,

$$B = IB = (CA)B = C(AB) = CI = C. \qquad \square$$

Note:

- The last result tells us that when A has an inverse, it is unique (there is only one inverse).
- So, we denote the inverse of A by A^{-1}.
- If B satisfies $AB = I$ and $BA = I$, then $B = A^{-1}$ (Inverse Criterion).

Inverses of 2×2 matrices

Example 3. Find the inverse of $A = \begin{bmatrix} 5 & -3 \\ 7 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$.

Solution.

In General:

If $ad - bc \neq 0$, then

$$\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}^{-1} = \tfrac{1}{ad-bc} \begin{bmatrix} d & -b \\ -c & a \end{bmatrix}.$$

Recall: A system of linear equations can be written in matrix form

$$A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b}.$$

THEOREM 2. If the $n \times n$ matrix A is invertible, then the system has the unique solution

$$\mathbf{x} = A^{-1}\mathbf{b}.$$

PROOF. Start from

$$A\mathbf{x} = \mathbf{b} \iff A^{-1}(A\mathbf{x}) = A^{-1}\mathbf{b} \iff (A^{-1}A)\mathbf{x} = A^{-1}\mathbf{b}.$$

We know that $A^{-1}A = I$. Hence $I\mathbf{x} = A^{-1}\mathbf{b}$. $\square$

EXAMPLE 4. Solve the system $\begin{cases} 5x_1 - 3x_2 = -4 \\ 7x_1 + 4x_2 = 8 \end{cases}$.

SOLUTION.

Algorithm 1. If A is an invertible (square) matrix, there exists a sequence of elementary row operations that

- carry A to the identity matrix I;
- carry I to the inverse A^{-1}.

Using block matrices, the algorithm can be rewritten as followed:

$$[\,A \quad I\,] \longrightarrow \cdots \longrightarrow [\,I \quad A^{-1}\,].$$

Example 5. Find the inverse of the matrix $A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & -1 \\ 3 & 2 & 0 \\ -1 & -1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$.

Solution.

Note: If A is an $n \times n$ matrix, either

- A can be reduced to I and then the algorithm produces A^{-1};
- or A can't be reduced to I and then A^{-1} does not exist.

Properties of the Inverse

Theorem 3. All the matrices in this statement are square matrices of the same size.

1. I is invertible and $I^{-1} = I$.
2. If A is invertible, then A^{-1} is invertible and $(A^{-1})^{-1} = A$.
3. If A and B are invertible, then AB is invertible and $(AB)^{-1} = B^{-1}A^{-1}$.
4. If A is invertible and $a \neq 0$ is a number, then aA is invertible and $(aA)^{-1} = \frac{1}{a}A^{-1}$.
5. If A is invertible, then $A^\top$ is invertible and $(A^\top)^{-1} = (A^{-1})^\top$.
6. If $AB = AC$, then $B = C$ (left cancellation law).
7. If $BA = CA$, then $B = C$ (right cancellation law).

Warning!

- The statement "If A and B are both invertible, then $A + B$ is invertible" is not true.
- Cross cancelling is wrong. This means "If $AB = CA$, then $B = C$" is a false statement.

Example 6. Find A if $\left(\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 2 & 1 \end{bmatrix} A\right)^{-1} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 2 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$.

Solution.

Example 7. If A, B, and C are $n \times n$ invertible matrices, show that ABC is invertible with $(ABC)^{-1} = C^{-1}B^{-1}A^{-1}$.

Solution.

Note:

- If A_1, A_2, …, A_k are invertible, then $(A_1A_2\cdots A_k)^{-1} = A_k^{-1}\cdots A_2^{-1}A_1^{-1}$.
- If A is invertible and $k \geq 0$, then $(A^k)^{-1} = (A^{-1})^k$.