

# Questions I got after last lecture

## 1. When are two vectors equal?



Let  $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n)$  and  $\mathbf{w} = (w_1, w_2, \dots, w_n) \in \mathbb{R}^n$ .

Then  $\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{w}$  if and only if  $v_i = w_i$ , for all  $i \in \{1, \dots, n\}$ .

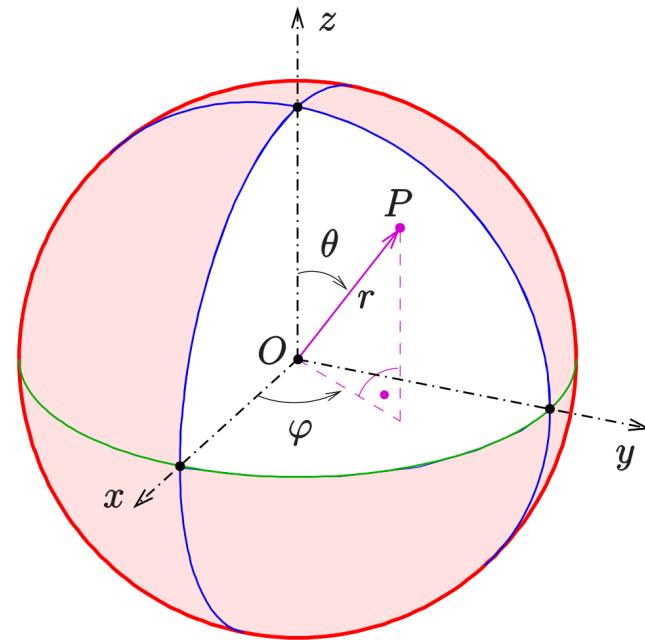
**Example.** If  $(2a, 3b + a) = (2, 4)$ , we have  $2a = 2$  and  $3b + a = 4$ .

Solving this, we get  $a = 1, b = 1$ .

💡  $\mathbb{R}^n$  is a special case of the [Cartesian product](#).

## 2. What is the generalization of polar coordinates in $\mathbb{R}^3$ ?

It is called [Spherical Coordinate System](#), which is introduced in Chapter 2 of the book.



## 2. Dot Product and Cross Product

In this lecture, we will discuss

- The Dot Product
  - Definition and Properties
  - Geometric interpretation
  - Test for orthogonality of vectors
  - Angle between vectors
  - Orthonormal set of vectors
  - Vector expressed in terms of orthogonal vectors
- The Cross Product
  - Definition and Properties
  - Geometric interpretation
  - Area of the parallelogram spanned by two vectors
  - Volume of the parallelepiped spanned by three vectors

### The Dot Product

#### Definition. Dot Product

Let  $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, \dots, v_n)$  and  $\mathbf{w} = (w_1, \dots, w_n)$  be vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^n$ ,  $n \geq 2$ . Then

$$\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = v_1w_1 + \cdots + v_nw_n. \in \mathbb{R}$$

In particular, if  $\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w} \in \mathbb{R}^2$ , then

$$\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = (v_1\mathbf{i} + v_2\mathbf{j}) \cdot (w_1\mathbf{i} + w_2\mathbf{j}) = v_1w_1 + v_2w_2,$$

and

$$\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = (v_1\mathbf{i} + v_2\mathbf{j} + v_3\mathbf{k}) \cdot (w_1\mathbf{i} + w_2\mathbf{j} + w_3\mathbf{k}) = v_1w_1 + v_2w_2 + v_3w_3$$

if  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  are vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ .

### Theorem 1. Properties of the Dot Product

Assume that  $\mathbf{u}$ ,  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$  are vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  (for  $n \geq 2$ ), and  $\alpha$  is a real number. Then

- $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{v}$  (commutative)
- $\mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w}) = \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{w}$  (distributive with respect to addition)
- $(\alpha \mathbf{u}) \cdot \mathbf{v} = \alpha(\mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v}) = \mathbf{u} \cdot (\alpha \mathbf{v})$  (distributive with respect to scalar multiplication)
- $\mathbf{0} \cdot \mathbf{v} = 0$  ( $\mathbf{0}$  is the zero vector)
- $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{v} = \|\mathbf{v}\|^2$ .
- If  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  are parallel, then  $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = \|\mathbf{v}\| \|\mathbf{w}\|$  if  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  have the same direction,  
and  $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = -\|\mathbf{v}\| \|\mathbf{w}\|$  if they have opposite directions.

### Theorem 2. Geometric Version of the Dot Product

Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  or  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . Then

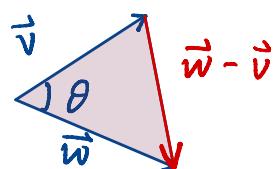
$$\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = \|\mathbf{v}\| \|\mathbf{w}\| \cos \theta,$$

where  $\theta$  is the angle between  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ .

Outline of the proof:

- If  $\vec{v}$  or  $\vec{w}$  is  $\vec{0}$ , then both sides of the eqn are 0
- If  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$  are parallel ( $\theta=0$ , or  $\pi$ ), it's easy to show  
$$\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = \|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \cos \theta$$
 1 or -1, if
- If  $\vec{v} \neq \vec{0}$ ,  $\vec{w} \neq \vec{0}$ , and  $0 < \theta < \pi$ .

$$\text{Law of cosine: } \|\vec{v} - \vec{w}\|^2 = \|\vec{v}\|^2 + \|\vec{w}\|^2 - 2\|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \cos \theta$$



$$\text{Property of dot product: } \|\vec{v} - \vec{w}\|^2 = (\vec{v} - \vec{w}) \cdot (\vec{v} - \vec{w}) = \|\vec{v}\|^2 - 2\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} + \|\vec{w}\|^2$$

Compare the RHS of the equations, we get  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = \|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \cos \theta$ .

$$\vec{v} \uparrow \frac{\pi}{2} \vec{w} \quad \cos \frac{\pi}{2} = 0$$

### Theorem 3. Test for Orthogonality of Vectors

Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be nonzero vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  or  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . Then  $\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w} = 0$  if and only if  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  are orthogonal.

### Definition. Orthonormal Set of Vectors

Vectors  $\mathbf{v}_1, \dots, \mathbf{v}_k$  (where  $k \geq 2$ ) in  $\mathbb{R}^n$ ,  $n \geq 2$  are said to form an orthonormal set if they are of unit length and each vector in the set is orthogonal to the others.

### Theorem 4. Angle Between Vectors

Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be nonzero vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  or  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . Then

$$\cos \theta = \frac{\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w}}{\|\mathbf{v}\| \|\mathbf{w}\|},$$

where  $\theta$  is the angle between  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ .

**Example 1.** Find the angle  $\theta$  between the vectors  $\mathbf{v} = (2, 1, -1)$  and  $\mathbf{w} = (3, -4, 1)$ .

ANS: Since  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = 2 \times 3 - 1 \times 4 - 1 \times 1 = 1$

$$\|\vec{v}\| = \sqrt{2^2 + 1^2 + 1^2} = \sqrt{6}$$

$$\|\vec{w}\| = \sqrt{3^2 + 4^2 + 1^2} = \sqrt{26}$$

then  $\cos \theta = \frac{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w}}{\|\vec{v}\| \cdot \|\vec{w}\|} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{6} \cdot \sqrt{26}} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{29}}$

$$\approx 0.08$$

$$\Rightarrow \theta \approx 1.491 \text{ rad}$$

### Theorem 5. Vector Expressed in Terms of Orthogonal Vectors

Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be (nonzero) orthogonal vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  and let  $\mathbf{a}$  be any vector in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ . Then

$$\mathbf{a} = a_{\mathbf{v}} \mathbf{v} + a_{\mathbf{w}} \mathbf{w},$$

where  $a_{\mathbf{v}} = \frac{\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{v}}{\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{v}}$  is the component of  $\mathbf{a}$  in the direction of  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $a_{\mathbf{w}} = \frac{\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{w}}{\mathbf{w} \cdot \mathbf{w}}$  is the component of  $\mathbf{a}$  in the direction of  $\mathbf{w}$  (or in the direction orthogonal to  $\mathbf{v}$ ).

**Special case :** Let  $\vec{v} = \vec{i} = (1, 0)$ ,  $\vec{w} = \vec{j} = (0, 1)$

Then  $\vec{a} = a_1 \vec{i} + a_2 \vec{j}$ . if  $\vec{a} = (a_1, a_2)$

when  $a_1 = \vec{a} \cdot \vec{i}$ ,  $a_2 = \vec{a} \cdot \vec{j}$

"Dot products give the value of the coordinates"

**Proof:** From Linear algebra, we know  $\vec{a}$  can be written as a linear combination of two mutually orthogonal vectors.

$$\vec{a} = a_{\vec{v}} \vec{v} + a_{\vec{w}} \vec{w} \text{ for some } a_{\vec{v}}, a_{\vec{w}} \in \mathbb{R}.$$

Take the dot product of  $\vec{a} = a_{\vec{v}} \vec{v} + a_{\vec{w}} \vec{w}$  with  $\vec{v}$ ,

we have  $\vec{a} \cdot \vec{v} = a_{\vec{v}} \vec{v} \cdot \vec{v} + a_{\vec{w}} \vec{w} \cdot \vec{v}$  x O

Thus

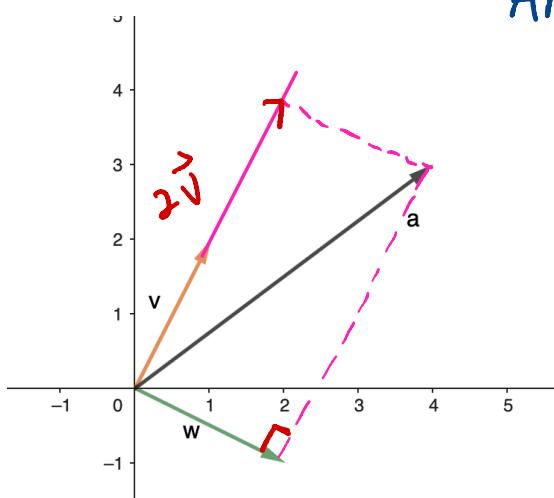
$$a_{\vec{v}} = \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{v}}{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{v}}$$

Similarly,

$$a_{\vec{w}} = \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{w}}{\vec{w} \cdot \vec{w}}$$

**Example 2.** Check that  $\mathbf{v} = (1, 2)$ , and  $\mathbf{w} = (2, -1)$  are mutually orthogonal vectors and express  $\mathbf{a} = (4, 3)$  in terms of  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$ .

ANS: Since  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = 1 \times 2 - 2 \times 1 = 0$



$$\vec{v} \perp \vec{w}$$

By the above theorem

$$\vec{a} = a_{\vec{v}} \vec{v} + a_{\vec{w}} \vec{w}$$

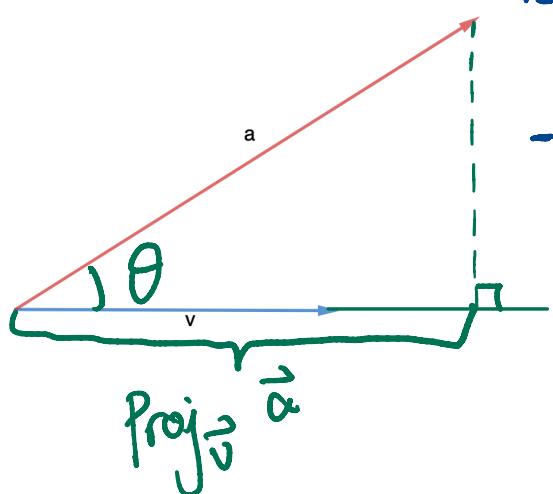
$$\text{where } a_{\vec{v}} = \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{v}}{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{v}} = \frac{1 \times 4 + 2 \times 3}{5} = 2$$

$$a_{\vec{w}} = \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{w}}{\vec{w} \cdot \vec{w}} = \frac{2 \times 4 - 3 \times 1}{5} = 1$$

$$\text{Thus } \vec{a} = 2\vec{v} + \vec{w}$$

Projection of  $\mathbf{a}$  onto  $\mathbf{v}$ .

In fact,  $a_{\vec{v}} \vec{v}$  in the Eq  $\vec{a} = a_{\vec{v}} \vec{v} + a_{\vec{w}} \vec{w}$  is the vector projection of  $\vec{a}$  onto  $\vec{v}$  ( $\text{proj}_{\vec{v}} \vec{a}$ )



- The scalar projection.

$$\begin{aligned} \|\text{proj}_{\vec{v}} \vec{a}\| &= \|\vec{a}\| \cdot \cos \theta \\ &= \|\vec{a}\| \cdot \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{v}}{\|\vec{a}\| \cdot \|\vec{v}\|} \\ &= \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{v}}{\|\vec{v}\|} \end{aligned}$$

- The projection vector of  $\vec{a}$  onto  $\vec{v}$

$$\text{proj}_{\vec{v}} \vec{a} = \|\text{proj}_{\vec{v}} \vec{a}\| \cdot \frac{\vec{v}}{\|\vec{v}\|} = \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{v}}{\|\vec{v}\|} \cdot \frac{\vec{v}}{\|\vec{v}\|} = \frac{\vec{a} \cdot \vec{v}}{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{v}} \vec{v} = a_{\vec{v}} \vec{v}$$

length                      unit vector

**Example 3.** Let  $\mathbf{u} = (-2, 3, -1)$  and  $\mathbf{v} = (-1, 1, 1)$ . Compute

(1) the projection of  $\mathbf{u}$  along  $\mathbf{v}$ , and

(2) the projection of  $\mathbf{u}$  orthogonal to  $\mathbf{v}$ .

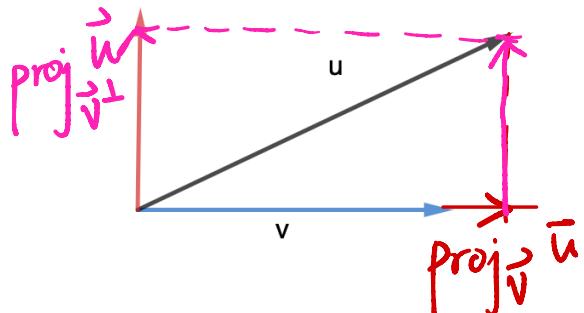
ANS: By the previous discussion.

We know

$$\begin{aligned}\text{proj}_{\vec{v}} \vec{u} &= \frac{\vec{u} \cdot \vec{v}}{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{v}} \vec{v} \\ &= \frac{2+3-1}{1+1+1} (-1, 1, 1) \\ &= \frac{4}{3} (-1, 1, 1),\end{aligned}$$

(2) Let  $\vec{v}^\perp$  denote the vector orthogonal to  $\vec{v}$  (with the same length). Then it's not hard to check

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Proj}_{\vec{v}^\perp} \vec{u} &= \vec{u} - \text{proj}_{\vec{v}} \vec{u} = (-2, 3, 1) - \frac{4}{3} (-1, 1, 1) \\ &= \frac{1}{3} (-2, 5, -7)\end{aligned}$$



## The Cross Product

### Definition Cross Product

The cross product of two vectors  $\mathbf{v} = v_1\mathbf{i} + v_2\mathbf{j} + v_3\mathbf{k}$  and  $\mathbf{w} = w_1\mathbf{i} + w_2\mathbf{j} + w_3\mathbf{k}$  is the vector  $\mathbf{c} = \mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}$  in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  defined by

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbf{c} = \mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w} &= \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \\ w_1 & w_2 & w_3 \end{vmatrix} = \mathbf{i} \begin{vmatrix} v_2 & v_3 \\ w_2 & w_3 \end{vmatrix} - \mathbf{j} \begin{vmatrix} v_1 & v_3 \\ w_1 & w_3 \end{vmatrix} + \mathbf{k} \begin{vmatrix} v_1 & v_2 \\ w_1 & w_2 \end{vmatrix} \\ &= (v_2 w_3 - v_3 w_2) \mathbf{i} - (v_1 w_3 - v_3 w_1) \mathbf{j} + (v_1 w_2 - v_2 w_1) \mathbf{k}\end{aligned}$$

**Example 4.** Compute  $\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}$  and  $\mathbf{w} \times \mathbf{v}$ , if  $\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{i} - 2\mathbf{k}$  and  $\mathbf{w} = -2\mathbf{i} + 3\mathbf{j} - 4\mathbf{k}$ .

ANS:

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{v} \times \vec{w} &= \begin{vmatrix} \vec{i} & \vec{j} & \vec{k} \\ 1 & 0 & -2 \\ -2 & 3 & -4 \end{vmatrix} = \vec{i} \begin{vmatrix} 0 & -2 \\ 3 & -4 \end{vmatrix} - \vec{j} \begin{vmatrix} 1 & -2 \\ -2 & -4 \end{vmatrix} + \vec{k} \begin{vmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ -2 & 3 \end{vmatrix} \\ &= 6\vec{i} + 8\vec{j} + 3\vec{k}\end{aligned}$$

Similarly,

$$\vec{w} \times \vec{v} = \begin{vmatrix} \vec{i} & \vec{j} & \vec{k} \\ -2 & 3 & -4 \\ 1 & 0 & -2 \end{vmatrix} = -6\vec{i} - 8\vec{j} - 3\vec{k}$$

Note  $\vec{v} \times \vec{w} = -\vec{w} \times \vec{v}$ . In general, it's true.

### Theorem 6. Properties of the Cross Product

Let  $\mathbf{u}$ ,  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$ , be vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  and let  $\alpha$  be any real number. The cross product satisfies

- $\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w} = -\mathbf{w} \times \mathbf{v}$  (anticommutativity),
- $\mathbf{u} \times (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w}) = \mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v} + \mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{w}$
- $(\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) \times \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{w} + \mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}$  (distributivity with respect to the sum).
- $\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{0}$  ( $\mathbf{0}$  is the zero vector in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ )
- $\alpha(\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}) = (\alpha\mathbf{v}) \times \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{v} \times (\alpha\mathbf{w})$ .

By the definitions of dot product and cross product, we have

**Lemma 1.** Let  $\mathbf{u} = (u_1, u_2, u_3)$ ,  $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3)$ , and  $\mathbf{w} = (w_1, w_2, w_3)$ , then

$$\mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}) = \begin{vmatrix} u_1 & u_2 & u_3 \\ v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \\ w_1 & w_2 & w_3 \end{vmatrix}$$

Let  $A$  be a matrix with rows formed by  $\mathbf{u}$ ,  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$ . By **Lemma 1**, we know  $\det(A) = \mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w})$ .

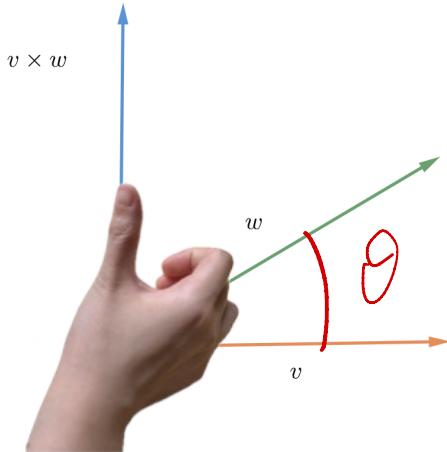
### Theorem 7. Geometric Properties of the Cross Product

Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . Then

- The cross product  $(\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w})$  is a vector orthogonal to both  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ .
- The magnitude of  $\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}$  is given by  $\|\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}\| = \|\mathbf{v}\| \|\mathbf{w}\| \sin \theta$ , where  $\theta$  denotes the angle between  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ .

## Right-hand rule

- Place your right hand in the direction of  $\mathbf{v}$ , and curl your fingers from  $\mathbf{v}$  to  $\mathbf{w}$  through the angle  $\theta$  (remember that  $\theta$  is the smaller of the two angles formed by the lines with directions  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  ).
- Your thumb then points in the direction of  $\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}$ .



## Theorem 8. Test for Parallel Vectors

Nonzero vectors  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  are parallel if and only if  $\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{0}$ .

**Question.** Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  and  $\theta$  be the angle between them, can you express  $\tan \theta$  using the dot and cross products of  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ ?

$$\text{ANS: Since } \vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = \|\vec{v}\| \cdot \|\vec{w}\| \cdot \cos \theta$$

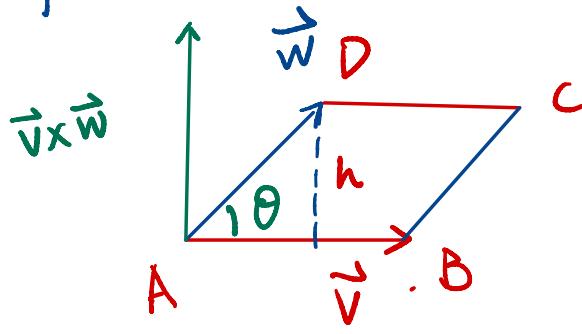
$$\|\vec{v} \times \vec{w}\| = \|\vec{v}\| \cdot \|\vec{w}\| \cdot \sin \theta$$

$$\tan \theta = \frac{\sin \theta}{\cos \theta} = \frac{\frac{\|\vec{v} \times \vec{w}\|}{\|\vec{v}\| \cdot \|\vec{w}\|}}{\frac{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w}}{\|\vec{v}\| \cdot \|\vec{w}\|}} = \frac{\|\vec{v} \times \vec{w}\|}{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w}}$$

### Theorem 9. Area of the Parallelogram Spanned by Two Vectors

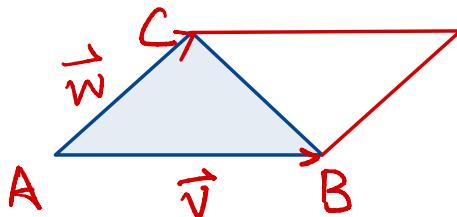
Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be nonzero, nonparallel vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . The magnitude  $\|\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}\|$  is the real number equal to the area of the parallelogram spanned by  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ .

Proof .



$$\begin{aligned} \text{Area}_{ABCD} &= \|\vec{v}\| \cdot h \\ &= \|\vec{v}\| \cdot \|\vec{w}\| \cdot \sin\theta \\ &= \|\vec{v} \times \vec{w}\| \\ &\text{by Thm 7(b)} \end{aligned}$$

**Exercise 5.** Find the area of the triangle with vertices  $(0, 2, 1)$ ,  $(3, 3, 3)$ , and  $(-1, 4, 2)$ .



**ANS.** Computing the area of the parallelogram with vertices located at  $A(0, 2, 1)$ ,  $B(3, 3, 3)$  and  $C(-1, 4, 2)$  and then dividing by 2 will yield the area of the triangle in question.

Let  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  be the vectors determined by the directed line segments  $\overrightarrow{AB}$  and  $\overrightarrow{AC}$  respectively.

Then  $\mathbf{v} = (3, 1, 2)$  and  $\mathbf{w} = (-1, 2, 1)$  and hence

$$\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ 3 & 1 & 2 \\ -1 & 2 & 1 \end{vmatrix} = (1 - 4, -3 - 2, 6 + 1) = (-3, -5, 7).$$

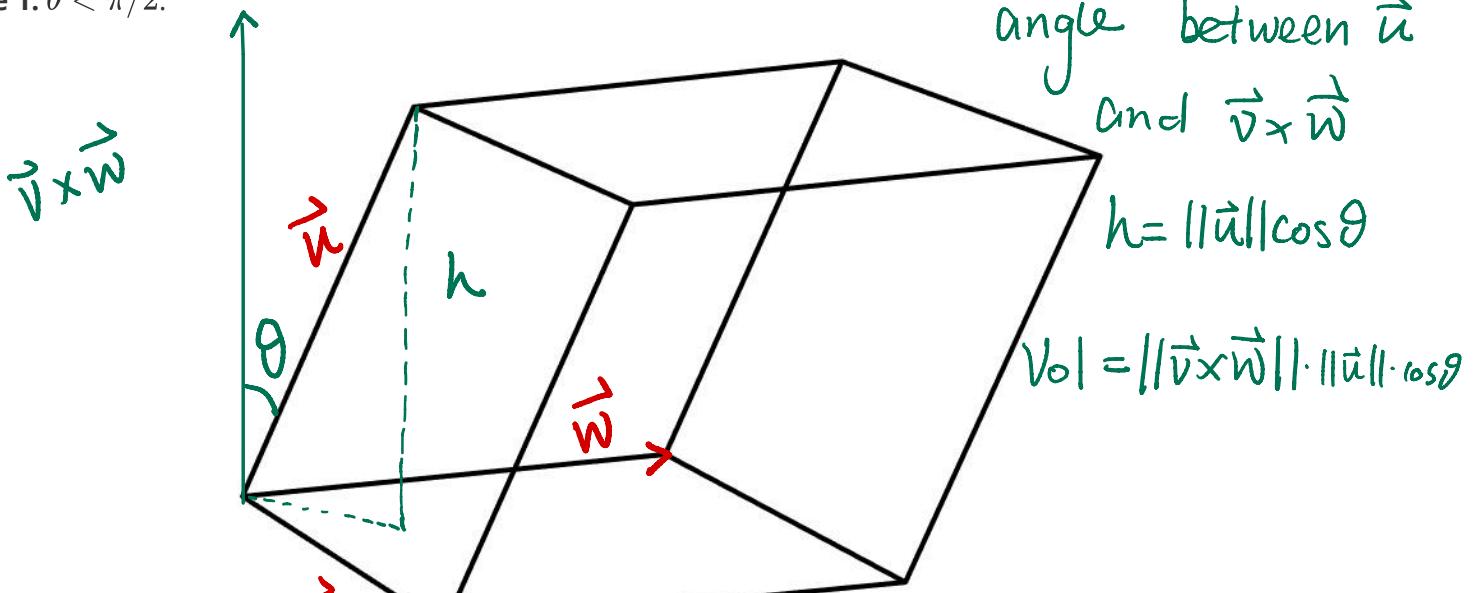
Therefore, the area of the triangle is  $\|\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}\|/2 = \|(-3, -5, 7)\|/2 = \sqrt{83}/2$ .

## Volume of the parallelepiped spanned by three vectors

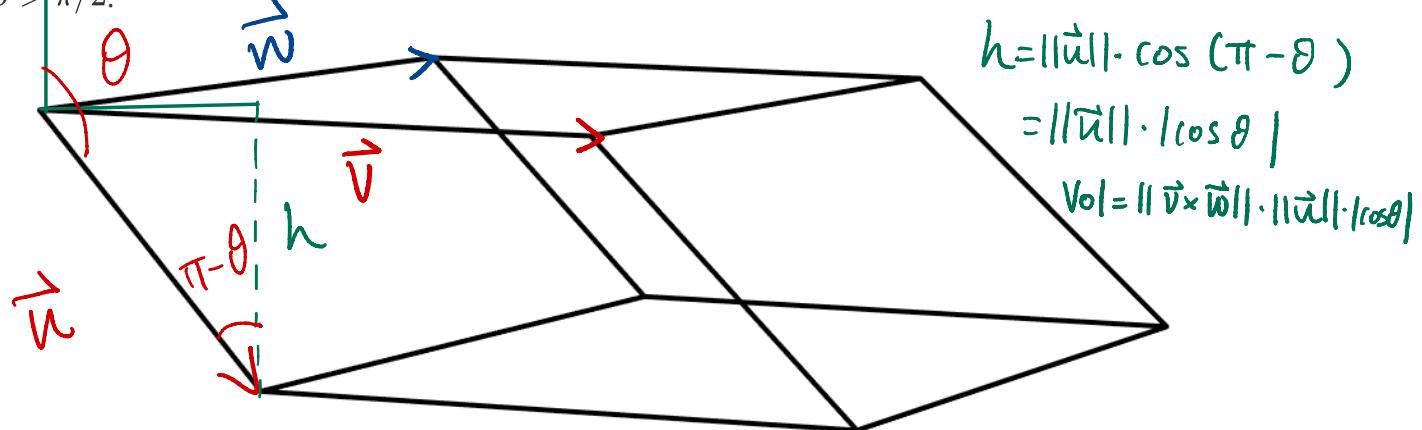
Let  $\mathbf{u}$ ,  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$  be nonzero vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  such that  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  are not parallel (so that they span a parallelogram) and such that  $\mathbf{u}$  does not belong to the plane spanned by  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ .

Construct the parallelepiped spanned by  $\mathbf{u}$ ,  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$  in the following figure.

**Case 1.**  $\theta < \pi/2$ .



**Case 2.**  $\theta > \pi/2$ .



Let  $\theta$  be the angle between  $\vec{u}$  and  $\vec{v} \times \vec{w}$

$$h = \|\vec{u}\| \cos \theta$$

$$|\text{Vol}| = \|\vec{v} \times \vec{w}\| \cdot \|\vec{u}\| \cos \theta$$

$$h = \|\vec{u}\| \cdot \cos(\pi - \theta)$$

$$= \|\vec{u}\| \cdot |\cos \theta|$$

$$|\text{Vol}| = \|\vec{v} \times \vec{w}\| \cdot \|\vec{u}\| \cdot |\cos \theta|$$

- $\|\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}\|$  is the area of the parallelogram spanned by  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$ .
- If  $\theta < \pi/2$ , the height  $h$  of the parallelepiped is  $h = \|\mathbf{u}\| \cos \theta$ .
- If  $\theta > \pi/2$ , then  $h = \|\mathbf{u}\| \cos(\pi - \theta) = -\|\mathbf{u}\| \cos \theta$ . In either case,  $h = \|\mathbf{u}\| |\cos \theta|$ .
- Therefore,

$$|\mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w})| = \|\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}\| \|\mathbf{u}\| |\cos \theta|$$

is the volume of the parallelepiped spanned by  $\mathbf{u}$ ,  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$ .

- Let  $A$  be the matrix with rows as  $\mathbf{u}$ ,  $\mathbf{v}$ , and  $\mathbf{w}$ . By **Lemma 1**, we know

$$\det(A) = \mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}) = \begin{vmatrix} u_1 & u_2 & u_3 \\ v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \\ w_1 & w_2 & w_3 \end{vmatrix}$$

- Thus, we have  $|\det(A)| = \text{vol}(P)$ .
- This is often referred as "the absolute value of the determinant gives the value of the volume".

### Remark. Volume and Determinant

- The notion of parallelepiped can be generalized in  $\mathbb{R}^n$  and so does the notion of the volume of the parallelepiped. The equation  $|\det(A)| = \text{vol}(P)$  still holds once those concepts are properly generalized.
- The proof of this is not trivial. You can refer to [this webpage](#) if you are curious about it.