

LECTURE 1

Vectors and Vector Spaces

1. Vectors

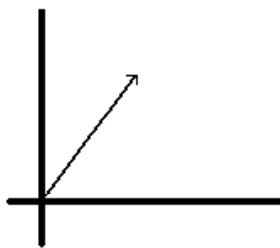
There are three fundamental ways of thinking about n -dimensional vectors:

: **Algebraically**; as ordered sets of n real numbers. For example, if v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n is a sequence of n numbers, we denote by

$$\mathbf{V} = (v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n)$$

the corresponding (algebraic) vector. We shall refer to the v_i as the *components* of the vector \mathbf{V} .

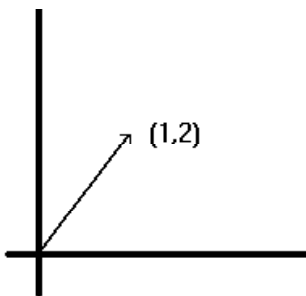
: **Geometrically**; as directed line segments (with its tail at the origin) in an n -dimensional space. In other words, a vector is essentially a figure like



We shall denote the length of a vector \mathbf{V} by $|\mathbf{V}|$.

: **Physically**; as quantities with both a magnitude and direction. For example, the position of an object with respect to a fixed origin is a quantity with both a magnitude (the distance of the object to the origin) and a direction.

The first two (mathematical) points of view are of course completely equivalent and it is trivial (yet often helpful) to pass back and forth between the algebraic and geometric points of view. For example, in two dimensions the “geometric vector” that corresponds to the “algebraic vector” $(1,2)$ is the directed line segment in the plane that has its tail at the origin and its head at the point $(1,2)$. In general, the coordinates of the head of a “geometric vector” correspond precisely to the ordered set of numbers that comprise the corresponding “algebraic vector”.



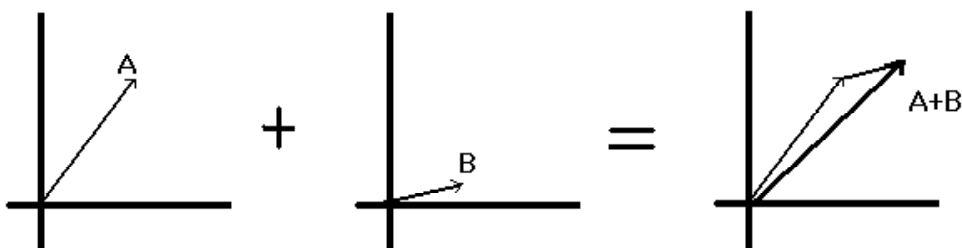
2. Vector Operations

We shall denote by \mathbb{R}^n the space of n -dimensional vectors. This notation arises from the observation that the specification of a 1-dimensional vector requires 1 real number (and $\mathbb{R}^1 = \mathbb{R}$ is standard notation for the set of real numbers)

2.1. Vector Addition: In the algebraic interpretation of vectors, the sum of two vectors $\mathbf{A} = (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n)$ and $\mathbf{B} = (b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n)$ is the vector (i.e. ordered set of numbers) whose components are the sum of the corresponding components of \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} ;

$$\mathbf{A} + \mathbf{B} = (a_1 + b_1, a_2 + b_2, \dots, a_n + b_n)$$

Geometrically, the sum of two vectors \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} is the vector obtained by “parallel-transporting” the tail of \mathbf{B} to the tip of \mathbf{A} and then drawing a directed line segment from the origin to the (new) position of the tip of \mathbf{B} :



2.2. Scalar Multiplication. In the algebraic representation of vectors scalar multiplication by a number λ is the operation corresponding to multiplying each of the components of a vector $\mathbf{V} = (v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n)$ by the number λ

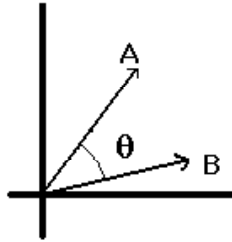
$$\lambda \mathbf{V} = (\lambda v_1, \lambda v_2, \dots, \lambda v_n)$$

In the geometric representation, the vector $\lambda \mathbf{V}$ is, so long as λ is non-negative, the vector with the same direction as \mathbf{V} but whose length has been rescaled by a factor of λ ; if λ is negative, then $\lambda \mathbf{V}$ is the vector whose direction is exactly the opposite of \mathbf{V} and whose length has been rescaled by a factor of $|\lambda|$.

2.3. Inner Product. The inner product of two algebraic vectors $\mathbf{A} = (a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n)$ and $\mathbf{B} = (b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n)$ is the number corresponding to the sum of the products of the corresponding components:

$$\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B} = a_1 b_1 + a_2 b_2 + \dots + a_n b_n$$

In the geometric representation of vectors, the inner product $\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B}$ is the number obtained by multiplying the product of the lengths of \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} by the cosine of the angle between \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} :



$$\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{B} = |\mathbf{A}| |\mathbf{B}| \cos(\theta)$$

Note that

$$\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{A} = |\mathbf{A}| |\mathbf{A}| \cos(0) = |\mathbf{A}|^2$$

or

$$|\mathbf{A}| = \sqrt{\mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{A}} = \sqrt{(a_1)^2 + (a_2)^2 + \dots + (a_n)^2}$$

which can be understood as the generalization of Pythagoras' theorem to n -dimensions

2.4. Cross Product. For 3-dimensional vectors, and only 3-dimensional vectors, we have also a way of multiplying two vectors to get another vector. In terms of the algebraic representation the cross product $\mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{B}$ of two vectors $\mathbf{A} = (a_1, a_2, a_3)$ and $\mathbf{B} = (b_1, b_2, b_3)$ is the vector

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{B} &= (a_2 b_3 - a_3 b_2, a_3 b_1 - a_1 b_3, a_1 b_2 - a_2 b_1) \\ &= \det \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ a_1 & a_2 & a_3 \\ b_1 & b_2 & b_3 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

In the geometric representation, the cross product of two 3-dimensional vectors \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} is the vector whose magnitude is

$$|\mathbf{A}| |\mathbf{B}| |\sin(\theta)|$$

where θ is the (shortest) angle from \mathbf{A} to \mathbf{B} and whose direction is perpendicular to the plane containing both \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} and such that when one faces the plane containing the \mathbf{A} and \mathbf{B} in the direction $\mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{B}$, \mathbf{B} is oriented clockwise from \mathbf{A} . This awkward description of the direction of the $\mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{B}$ is stated more simply in terms of the "right hand rule":

If you point the index finger of your right hand in the direction of \mathbf{A} and the middle finger of your right hand in the direction of \mathbf{B} then the direction of $\mathbf{A} \times \mathbf{B}$ will be the direction of your right thumb. (when it's oriented perpendicularly to the first two fingers).

3. Standard Vectors

The rest of this lecture (and indeed for the rest of the course), we shall specialize matters to the case of vectors in a three dimensional space. Since we commonly label the variables representing the coordinates of a 3-dimensional space by x , y , and z we shall often label the first, second, and components of a 3-dimensional vector \mathbf{V} by V_x , V_y , and V_z . In the set of all 3-dimensional vectors, there are three most fundamental; the unit vectors along the coordinate axes. We shall label these as

$$\mathbf{i} = (1, 0, 0)$$

$$\mathbf{j} = (0, 1, 0)$$

$$\mathbf{k} = (0, 0, 1)$$

These vectors have the property that if \mathbf{V} is *any* vector, its first (or x) component is precisely $\mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{i}$, its second (or y) component is precisely $\mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{j}$, and its third (or z) component is precisely $\mathbf{V} \cdot \mathbf{k}$.