

# lyryx with Open Texts

# LINEAR ALGEBRA with Applications

## Open Edition



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Adapted for

Emory University

Math 221

Linear Algebra

Sections 1 & 2

Lectured and adapted by

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Course page

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# Contents

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<b>1</b>	<b>Systems of Linear Equations</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	Solutions and Elementary Operations . . . . .	6
1.2	Gaussian Elimination . . . . .	16
1.3	Homogeneous Equations . . . . .	28
	Supplementary Exercises for Chapter 1 . . . . .	37
<b>2</b>	<b>Matrix Algebra</b>	<b>39</b>
2.1	Matrix Addition, Scalar Multiplication, and Transposition . . . . .	40
2.2	Matrix-Vector Multiplication . . . . .	53
2.3	Matrix Multiplication . . . . .	72
2.4	Matrix Inverses . . . . .	91
2.5	Elementary Matrices . . . . .	109
2.6	Linear Transformations . . . . .	119
2.7	LU-Factorization . . . . .	135
<b>3</b>	<b>Determinants and Diagonalization</b>	<b>147</b>
3.1	The Cofactor Expansion . . . . .	148
3.2	Determinants and Matrix Inverses . . . . .	163
3.3	Diagonalization and Eigenvalues . . . . .	178
	Supplementary Exercises for Chapter 3 . . . . .	201
<b>4</b>	<b>Vector Geometry</b>	<b>203</b>
4.1	Vectors and Lines . . . . .	204
4.2	Projections and Planes . . . . .	223
4.3	More on the Cross Product . . . . .	244
4.4	Linear Operators on $\mathbb{R}^3$ . . . . .	251
	Supplementary Exercises for Chapter 4 . . . . .	260
<b>5</b>	<b>Vector Space <math>\mathbb{R}^n</math></b>	<b>263</b>
5.1	Subspaces and Spanning . . . . .	264
5.2	Independence and Dimension . . . . .	273
5.3	Orthogonality . . . . .	287
5.4	Rank of a Matrix . . . . .	297

5.5	Similarity and Diagonalization . . . . .	307
	Supplementary Exercises for Chapter 5 . . . . .	320
<b>6</b>	<b>Vector Spaces</b>	<b>321</b>
6.1	Examples and Basic Properties . . . . .	322
6.2	Subspaces and Spanning Sets . . . . .	333
6.3	Linear Independence and Dimension . . . . .	342
6.4	Finite Dimensional Spaces . . . . .	354
	Supplementary Exercises for Chapter 6 . . . . .	364
<b>7</b>	<b>Linear Transformations</b>	<b>365</b>
7.1	Examples and Elementary Properties . . . . .	366
7.2	Kernel and Image of a Linear Transformation . . . . .	374
7.3	Isomorphisms and Composition . . . . .	385
<b>8</b>	<b>Orthogonality</b>	<b>399</b>
8.1	Orthogonal Complements and Projections . . . . .	400
8.2	Orthogonal Diagonalization . . . . .	410
8.3	Positive Definite Matrices . . . . .	421
8.4	QR-Factorization . . . . .	427
8.5	Computing Eigenvalues . . . . .	431
8.6	The Singular Value Decomposition . . . . .	436
8.6.1	Singular Value Decompositions . . . . .	436
8.6.2	Fundamental Subspaces . . . . .	442
8.6.3	The Polar Decomposition of a Real Square Matrix . . . . .	445
8.6.4	The Pseudoinverse of a Matrix . . . . .	447

# 1. Systems of Linear Equations

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## Contents

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1.1 Solutions and Elementary Operations . . . . .	6
1.2 Gaussian Elimination . . . . .	16
1.3 Homogeneous Equations . . . . .	28
Supplementary Exercises for Chapter 1 . . . . .	37

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## 1.1 Solutions and Elementary Operations

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Practical problems in many fields of study—such as biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, electronics, engineering, physics and the social sciences—can often be reduced to solving a system of linear equations. Linear algebra arose from attempts to find systematic methods for solving these systems, so it is natural to begin this book by studying linear equations.

If  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  are real numbers, the graph of an equation of the form

$$ax + by = c$$

is a straight line (if  $a$  and  $b$  are not both zero), so such an equation is called a *linear* equation in the variables  $x$  and  $y$ . However, it is often convenient to write the variables as  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$ , particularly when more than two variables are involved. An equation of the form

$$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + \cdots + a_nx_n = b$$

is called a **linear equation** in the  $n$  variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$ . Here  $a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n$  denote real numbers (called the **coefficients** of  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$ , respectively) and  $b$  is also a number (called the **constant term** of the equation). A finite collection of linear equations in the variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$  is called a **system of linear equations** in these variables. Hence,

$$2x_1 - 3x_2 + 5x_3 = 7$$

is a linear equation; the coefficients of  $x_1, x_2$ , and  $x_3$  are 2,  $-3$ , and 5, and the constant term is 7. Note that each variable in a linear equation occurs to the first power only.

Given a linear equation  $a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + \cdots + a_nx_n = b$ , a sequence  $s_1, s_2, \dots, s_n$  of  $n$  numbers is called a **solution** to the equation if

$$a_1s_1 + a_2s_2 + \cdots + a_ns_n = b$$

that is, if the equation is satisfied when the substitutions  $x_1 = s_1, x_2 = s_2, \dots, x_n = s_n$  are made. A sequence of numbers is called a **solution to a system** of equations if it is a solution to every equation in the system.

For example,  $x = -2, y = 5, z = 0$  and  $x = 0, y = 4, z = -1$  are both solutions to the system

$$\begin{aligned}x + y + z &= 3 \\2x + y + 3z &= 1\end{aligned}$$

A system may have no solution at all, or it may have a unique solution, or it may have an infinite family of solutions. For instance, the system  $x + y = 2, x + y = 3$  has no solution because the sum of two numbers cannot be 2 and 3 simultaneously. A system that has no solution is called **inconsistent**; a system with at least one solution is called **consistent**. The system in the following example has infinitely many solutions.

**Example 1.1.1**

Show that, for arbitrary values of  $s$  and  $t$ ,

$$x_1 = t - s + 1$$

$$x_2 = t + s + 2$$

$$x_3 = s$$

$$x_4 = t$$

is a solution to the system

$$\begin{aligned} x_1 - 2x_2 + 3x_3 + x_4 &= -3 \\ 2x_1 - x_2 + 3x_3 - x_4 &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

**Solution.** Simply substitute these values of  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ ,  $x_3$ , and  $x_4$  in each equation.

$$x_1 - 2x_2 + 3x_3 + x_4 = (t - s + 1) - 2(t + s + 2) + 3s + t = -3$$

$$2x_1 - x_2 + 3x_3 - x_4 = 2(t - s + 1) - (t + s + 2) + 3s - t = 0$$

Because both equations are satisfied, it is a solution for all choices of  $s$  and  $t$ .

The quantities  $s$  and  $t$  in Example 1.1.1 are called **parameters**, and the set of solutions, described in this way, is said to be given in **parametric form** and is called the **general solution** to the system. It turns out that the solutions to *every* system of equations (if there *are* solutions) can be given in parametric form (that is, the variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots$  are given in terms of new independent variables  $s, t$ , etc.). The following example shows how this happens in the simplest systems where only one equation is present.

**Example 1.1.2**

Describe all solutions to  $3x - y + 2z = 6$  in parametric form.

**Solution.** Solving the equation for  $y$  in terms of  $x$  and  $z$ , we get  $y = 3x + 2z - 6$ . If  $s$  and  $t$  are arbitrary then, setting  $x = s$ ,  $z = t$ , we get solutions

$$x = s$$

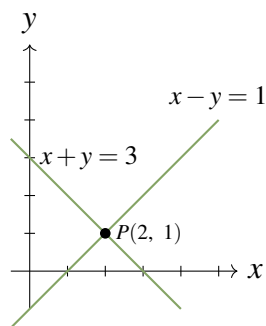
$$y = 3s + 2t - 6 \quad s \text{ and } t \text{ arbitrary}$$

$$z = t$$

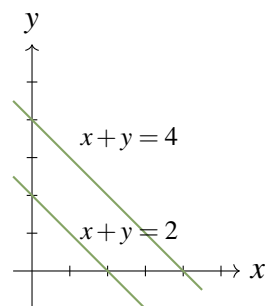
Of course we could have solved for  $x$ :  $x = \frac{1}{3}(y - 2z + 6)$ . Then, if we take  $y = p$ ,  $z = q$ , the solutions are represented as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} x &= \frac{1}{3}(p - 2q + 6) \\ y &= p \\ z &= q \end{aligned} \quad p \text{ and } q \text{ arbitrary}$$

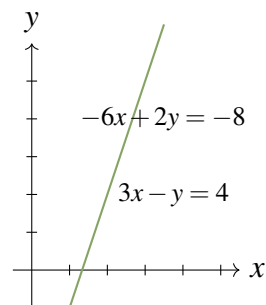
The same family of solutions can “look” quite different!



(a) Unique Solution  
( $x = 2, y = 1$ )



(b) No Solution



(c) Infinitely many solutions  
( $x = t, y = 3t - 4$ )

**Figure 1.1.1**

When only two variables are involved, the solutions to systems of linear equations can be described geometrically because the graph of a linear equation  $ax + by = c$  is a straight line if  $a$  and  $b$  are not both zero. Moreover, a point  $P(s, t)$  with coordinates  $s$  and  $t$  lies on the line if and only if  $as + bt = c$ —that is when  $x = s, y = t$  is a solution to the equation. Hence the solutions to a *system* of linear equations correspond to the points  $P(s, t)$  that lie on *all* the lines in question.

In particular, if the system consists of just one equation, there must be infinitely many solutions because there are infinitely many points on a line. If the system has two equations, there are three possibilities for the corresponding straight lines:

1. *The lines intersect at a single point. Then the system has a unique solution corresponding to that point.*
2. *The lines are parallel (and distinct) and so do not intersect. Then the system has no solution.*
3. *The lines are identical. Then the system has infinitely many solutions—one for each point on the (common) line.*

These three situations are illustrated in Figure 1.1.1. In each case the graphs of two specific lines are plotted and the corresponding equations are indicated. In the last case, the equations are  $3x - y = 4$  and  $-6x + 2y = -8$ , which have identical graphs.

With three variables, the graph of an equation  $ax + by + cz = d$  can be shown to be a plane (see Section 4.2) and so again provides a “picture” of the set of solutions. However, this graphical method has its limitations: When more than three variables are involved, no physical image of the graphs (called hyperplanes) is possible. It is necessary to turn to a more “algebraic” method of solution.

Before describing the method, we introduce a concept that simplifies the computations involved. Consider the following system

$$\begin{aligned} 3x_1 + 2x_2 - x_3 + x_4 &= -1 \\ 2x_1 &\quad - x_3 + 2x_4 &= 0 \\ 3x_1 + x_2 + 2x_3 + 5x_4 &= 2 \end{aligned}$$

of three equations in four variables. The array of numbers<sup>1</sup>

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 3 & 2 & -1 & 1 & -1 \\ 2 & 0 & -1 & 2 & 0 \\ 3 & 1 & 2 & 5 & 2 \end{array} \right]$$

occurring in the system is called the **augmented matrix** of the system. Each row of the matrix consists of the coefficients of the variables (in order) from the corresponding equation, together

<sup>1</sup>A rectangular array of numbers is called a **matrix**. Matrices will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.



with the constant term. For clarity, the constants are separated by a vertical line. The augmented matrix is just a different way of describing the system of equations. The array of coefficients of the variables

$$\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 2 & -1 & 1 \\ 2 & 0 & -1 & 2 \\ 3 & 1 & 2 & 5 \end{bmatrix}$$

is called the **coefficient matrix** of the system and  $\begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 0 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}$  is called the **constant matrix** of the system.

## Elementary Operations

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The algebraic method for solving systems of linear equations is described as follows. Two such systems are said to be **equivalent** if they have the same set of solutions. A system is solved by writing a series of systems, one after the other, each equivalent to the previous system. Each of these systems has the same set of solutions as the original one; the aim is to end up with a system that is easy to solve. Each system in the series is obtained from the preceding system by a simple manipulation chosen so that it does not change the set of solutions.

As an illustration, we solve the system  $x + 2y = -2$ ,  $2x + y = 7$  in this manner. At each stage, the corresponding augmented matrix is displayed. The original system is

$$\begin{array}{r} x + 2y = -2 \\ 2x + y = 7 \end{array} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 2 & -2 \\ 2 & 1 & 7 \end{array} \right]$$

First, subtract twice the first equation from the second. The resulting system is

$$\begin{array}{r} x + 2y = -2 \\ -3y = 11 \end{array} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 2 & -2 \\ 0 & -3 & 11 \end{array} \right]$$

which is equivalent to the original (see Theorem 1.1.1). At this stage we obtain  $y = -\frac{11}{3}$  by multiplying the second equation by  $-\frac{1}{3}$ . The result is the equivalent system

$$\begin{array}{r} x + 2y = -2 \\ y = -\frac{11}{3} \end{array} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 2 & -2 \\ 0 & 1 & -\frac{11}{3} \end{array} \right]$$

Finally, we subtract twice the second equation from the first to get another equivalent system.

$$\begin{array}{r} x = \frac{16}{3} \\ y = -\frac{11}{3} \end{array} \quad \left[ \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 0 & \frac{16}{3} \\ 0 & 1 & -\frac{11}{3} \end{array} \right]$$

Now *this* system is easy to solve! And because it is equivalent to the original system, it provides the solution to that system.

Observe that, at each stage, a certain operation is performed on the system (and thus on the augmented matrix) to produce an equivalent system.

**Definition 1.1 Elementary Operations**

The following operations, called **elementary operations**, can routinely be performed on systems of linear equations to produce equivalent systems.

- I. Interchange two equations.
- II. Multiply one equation by a nonzero number.
- III. Add a multiple of one equation to a different equation.

**Theorem 1.1.1**

Suppose that a sequence of elementary operations is performed on a system of linear equations. Then the resulting system has the same set of solutions as the original, so the two systems are equivalent.

The proof is given at the end of this section.

Elementary operations performed on a system of equations produce corresponding manipulations of the *rows* of the augmented matrix. Thus, multiplying a row of a matrix by a number  $k$  means multiplying *every entry* of the row by  $k$ . Adding one row to another row means adding *each entry* of that row to the corresponding entry of the other row. Subtracting two rows is done similarly. Note that we regard two rows as equal when corresponding entries are the same.

In hand calculations (and in computer programs) we manipulate the rows of the augmented matrix rather than the equations. For this reason we restate these elementary operations for matrices.

**Definition 1.2 Elementary Row Operations**

The following are called **elementary row operations** on a matrix.

- I. Interchange two rows.
- II. Multiply one row by a nonzero number.
- III. Add a multiple of one row to a different row.

In the illustration above, a series of such operations led to a matrix of the form

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 0 & * \\ 0 & 1 & * \end{array} \right]$$

where the asterisks represent arbitrary numbers. In the case of three equations in three variables, the goal is to produce a matrix of the form

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 & * \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & * \end{array} \right]$$

This does not always happen, as we will see in the next section. Here is an example in which it does happen.

### Example 1.1.3

Find all solutions to the following system of equations.

$$\begin{aligned} 3x + 4y + z &= 1 \\ 2x + 3y &= 0 \\ 4x + 3y - z &= -2 \end{aligned}$$

**Solution.** The augmented matrix of the original system is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 3 & 4 & 1 & 1 \\ 2 & 3 & 0 & 0 \\ 4 & 3 & -1 & -2 \end{array} \right]$$

To create a 1 in the upper left corner we could multiply row 1 through by  $\frac{1}{3}$ . However, the 1 can be obtained without introducing fractions by subtracting row 2 from row 1. The result is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 2 & 3 & 0 & 0 \\ 4 & 3 & -1 & -2 \end{array} \right]$$

The upper left 1 is now used to “clean up” the first column, that is create zeros in the other positions in that column. First subtract 2 times row 1 from row 2 to obtain

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -2 \\ 4 & 3 & -1 & -2 \end{array} \right]$$

Next subtract 4 times row 1 from row 3. The result is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -2 \\ 0 & -1 & -5 & -6 \end{array} \right]$$

This completes the work on column 1. We now use the 1 in the second position of the second row to clean up the second column by subtracting row 2 from row 1 and then adding row 2 to row 3. For convenience, both row operations are done in one step. The result is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 3 & 3 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & -7 & -8 \end{array} \right]$$

Note that the last two manipulations *did not affect* the first column (the second row has a zero there), so our previous effort there has not been undermined. Finally we clean up the third column. Begin by multiplying row 3 by  $-\frac{1}{7}$  to obtain

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 3 & 3 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \frac{8}{7} \end{array} \right]$$

Now subtract 3 times row 3 from row 1, and then add 2 times row 3 to row 2 to get

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 & -\frac{3}{7} \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & \frac{2}{7} \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \frac{8}{7} \end{array} \right]$$

The corresponding equations are  $x = -\frac{3}{7}$ ,  $y = \frac{2}{7}$ , and  $z = \frac{8}{7}$ , which give the (unique) solution.

Every elementary row operation can be **reversed** by another elementary row operation of the same type (called its **inverse**). To see how, we look at types I, II, and III separately:

*Type I* Interchanging two rows is reversed by interchanging them again.

*Type II* Multiplying a row by a nonzero number  $k$  is reversed by multiplying by  $1/k$ .

*Type III* Adding  $k$  times row  $p$  to a different row  $q$  is reversed by adding  $-k$  times row  $p$  to row  $q$  (in the new matrix). Note that  $p \neq q$  is essential here.

To illustrate the Type III situation, suppose there are four rows in the original matrix, denoted  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$ , and that  $k$  times  $R_2$  is added to  $R_3$ . Then the reverse operation adds  $-k$  times  $R_2$  to  $R_3$ . The following diagram illustrates the effect of doing the operation first and then the reverse:

$$\begin{bmatrix} R_1 \\ R_2 \\ R_3 \\ R_4 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} R_1 \\ R_2 \\ R_3 + kR_2 \\ R_4 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} R_1 \\ R_2 \\ (R_3 + kR_2) - kR_2 \\ R_4 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} R_1 \\ R_2 \\ R_3 \\ R_4 \end{bmatrix}$$

The existence of inverses for elementary row operations and hence for elementary operations on a system of equations, gives:

**Proof of Theorem 1.1.1.** Suppose that a system of linear equations is transformed into a new system by a sequence of elementary operations. Then every solution of the original system is automatically a solution of the new system because adding equations, or multiplying an equation by a nonzero number, always results in a valid equation. In the same way, each solution of the new system must be a solution to the original system because the original system can be obtained from the new one by another series of elementary operations (the inverses of the originals). It follows that the original and new systems have the same solutions. This proves Theorem 1.1.1.  $\square$

## Exercises for 1.1

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**Exercise 1.1.1** In each case verify that the following are solutions for all values of  $s$  and  $t$ .

a.  $x = 19t - 35$  is a solution of 
$$\begin{aligned} 2x + 3y + z &= 5 \\ y &= 25 - 13t \\ z &= t \end{aligned}$$

b.  $x_1 = 2s + 12t + 13$  is a solution of 
$$\begin{aligned} x_2 &= s \\ x_3 &= -s - 3t - 3 \\ x_4 &= t \\ 2x_1 + 5x_2 + 9x_3 + 3x_4 &= -1 \\ x_1 + 2x_2 + 4x_3 &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

---

b.  $2(2s + 12t + 13) + 5s + 9(-s - 3t - 3) + 3t = -1;$   
 $(2s + 12t + 13) + 2s + 4(-s - 3t - 3) = 1$

**Exercise 1.1.2** Find all solutions to the following in parametric form in two ways.

a)  $3x + y = 2$                       b)  $2x + 3y = 1$   
 c)  $3x - y + 2z = 5$                 d)  $x - 2y + 5z = 1$

---

b.  $x = t, y = \frac{1}{3}(1 - 2t)$  or  $x = \frac{1}{2}(1 - 3s), y = s$

d.  $x = 1 + 2s - 5t, y = s, z = t$  or  $x = s, y = t,$   
 $z = \frac{1}{5}(1 - s + 2t)$

**Exercise 1.1.3** Regarding  $2x = 5$  as the equation  $2x + 0y = 5$  in two variables, find all solutions in parametric form.

**Exercise 1.1.4** Regarding  $4x - 2y = 3$  as the equation  $4x - 2y + 0z = 3$  in three variables, find all solutions in parametric form. \_\_\_\_\_  
 $x = \frac{1}{4}(3 + 2s), y = s, z = t$

**Exercise 1.1.5** Find all solutions to the general system  $ax = b$  of one equation in one variable (a) when  $a = 0$  and (b) when  $a \neq 0$ .

a. No solution if  $b \neq 0$ . If  $b = 0$ , any  $x$  is a solution.

b.  $x = \frac{b}{a}$

**Exercise 1.1.6** Show that a system consisting of exactly one linear equation can have no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions. Give examples.

**Exercise 1.1.7** Write the augmented matrix for each of the following systems of linear equations.

a)  $x - 3y = 5$                       b)  $x + 2y = 0$   
 $2x + y = 1$                                $y = 1$   
 c)  $x - y + z = 2$                       d)  $x + y = 1$   
 $x - z = 1$                                    $y + z = 0$   
 $y + 2x = 0$                                  $z - x = 2$

---

b.  $\left[ \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 \end{array} \right]$

d.  $\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \\ -1 & 0 & 1 & 2 \end{array} \right]$

**Exercise 1.1.8** Write a system of linear equations that has each of the following augmented matrices.

a)  $\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & -1 & 6 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 3 \\ 2 & -1 & 0 & 1 \end{array} \right]$                       b)  $\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 2 & -1 & 0 & -1 \\ -3 & 2 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 3 \end{array} \right]$

---

$2x - y = -1$   
 b.  $-3x + 2y + z = 0$   
 $y + z = 3$   
 $2x_1 - x_2 = -1$   
 or  $-3x_1 + 2x_2 + x_3 = 0$   
 $x_2 + x_3 = 3$

**Exercise 1.1.9** Find the solution of each of the following systems of linear equations using augmented matrices.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{a)} & x - 3y = 1 \\ & 2x - 7y = 3 \\ \text{c)} & 2x + 3y = -1 \\ & 3x + 4y = 2 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{ll} \text{b)} & x + 2y = 1 \\ & 3x + 4y = -1 \\ \text{d)} & 3x + 4y = 1 \\ & 4x + 5y = -3 \end{array}$$

$$\text{b. } x = -3, y = 2$$

$$\text{d. } x = -17, y = 13$$

**Exercise 1.1.10** Find the solution of each of the following systems of linear equations using augmented matrices.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{a)} & x + y + 2z = -1 \\ & 2x + y + 3z = 0 \\ & -2y + z = 2 \\ \text{b)} & 2x + y + z = -1 \\ & x + 2y + z = 0 \\ & 3x - 2z = 5 \end{array}$$

$$\text{b. } x = \frac{1}{9}, y = \frac{10}{9}, z = -\frac{7}{3}$$

**Exercise 1.1.11** Find all solutions (if any) of the following systems of linear equations.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{a)} & 3x - 2y = 5 \\ & -12x + 8y = -20 \\ \text{b)} & 3x - 2y = 5 \\ & -12x + 8y = 16 \end{array}$$

b. No solution

**Exercise 1.1.12** Show that the system

$$\begin{cases} x + 2y - z = a \\ 2x + y + 3z = b \\ x - 4y + 9z = c \end{cases}$$

is inconsistent unless  $c = 2b - 3a$ .

**Exercise 1.1.13** By examining the possible positions of lines in the plane, show that two equations in two variables can have zero, one, or infinitely many solutions.

**Exercise 1.1.14** In each case either show that the statement is true, or give an example<sup>2</sup> showing it is false.

<sup>2</sup>Such an example is called a **counterexample**. For example, if the statement is that “all philosophers have beards”, the existence of a non-bearded philosopher would be a counterexample proving that the statement is false. This is discussed again in Appendix ??.

- If a linear system has  $n$  variables and  $m$  equations, then the augmented matrix has  $n$  rows.
- A consistent linear system must have infinitely many solutions.
- If a row operation is done to a consistent linear system, the resulting system must be consistent.
- If a series of row operations on a linear system results in an inconsistent system, the original system is inconsistent.

b. F.  $x + y = 0, x - y = 0$  has a unique solution.

d. T. Theorem 1.1.1.

**Exercise 1.1.15** Find a quadratic  $a + bx + cx^2$  such that the graph of  $y = a + bx + cx^2$  contains each of the points  $(-1, 6)$ ,  $(2, 0)$ , and  $(3, 2)$ .

**Exercise 1.1.16** Solve the system  $\begin{cases} 3x + 2y = 5 \\ 7x + 5y = 1 \end{cases}$  by changing variables  $\begin{cases} x = 5x' - 2y' \\ y = -7x' + 3y' \end{cases}$  and solving the resulting equations for  $x'$  and  $y'$ .

$$x' = 5, y' = 1, \text{ so } x = 23, y = -32$$

**Exercise 1.1.17** Find  $a, b$ , and  $c$  such that

$$\frac{x^2 - x + 3}{(x^2 + 2)(2x - 1)} = \frac{ax + b}{x^2 + 2} + \frac{c}{2x - 1}$$

[Hint: Multiply through by  $(x^2 + 2)(2x - 1)$  and equate coefficients of powers of  $x$ .]

$$a = -\frac{1}{9}, b = -\frac{5}{9}, c = \frac{11}{9}$$

**Exercise 1.1.18** A zookeeper wants to give an animal 42 mg of vitamin A and 65 mg of vitamin D per day. He has two supplements: the first contains 10% vitamin A and 25% vitamin D; the second contains 20% vitamin A and 25% vitamin D. How much

of each supplement should he give the animal each day? \$4.50, \$5.20

**Exercise 1.1.19** Workmen John and Joe earn a total of \$24.60 when John works 2 hours and Joe works 3 hours. If John works 3 hours and Joe works 2 hours, they get \$23.90. Find their hourly rates.

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**Exercise 1.1.20** A biologist wants to create a diet from fish and meal containing 183 grams of protein and 93 grams of carbohydrate per day. If fish contains 70% protein and 10% carbohydrate, and meal contains 30% protein and 60% carbohydrate, how much of each food is required each day?

## 1.2 Gaussian Elimination

The algebraic method introduced in the preceding section can be summarized as follows: Given a system of linear equations, use a sequence of elementary row operations to carry the augmented matrix to a “nice” matrix (meaning that the corresponding equations are easy to solve). In Example 1.1.3, this nice matrix took the form

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 & * \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & * \end{array} \right]$$

The following definitions identify the nice matrices that arise in this process.

### Definition 1.3 Row-Echelon Form (Reduced)

A matrix is said to be in **row-echelon form** (and will be called a **row-echelon matrix**) if it satisfies the following three conditions:

1. All **zero rows** (consisting entirely of zeros) are at the bottom.
2. The first nonzero entry from the left in each nonzero row is a 1, called the **leading 1** for that row.
3. Each leading 1 is to the right of all leading 1s in the rows above it.

A row-echelon matrix is said to be in **reduced row-echelon form** (and will be called a **reduced row-echelon matrix**) if, in addition, it satisfies the following condition:

4. Each leading 1 is the only nonzero entry in its column.

The row-echelon matrices have a “staircase” form, as indicated by the following example (the asterisks indicate arbitrary numbers).

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccccccc} 0 & \boxed{1} & * & * & * & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & * & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

The leading 1s proceed “down and to the right” through the matrix. Entries above and to the right of the leading 1s are arbitrary, but all entries below and to the left of them are zero. Hence, a matrix in row-echelon form is in reduced form if, in addition, the entries directly above each leading 1 are all zero. Note that a matrix in row-echelon form can, with a few more row operations, be carried to reduced form (use row operations to create zeros above each leading one in succession, beginning from the right).



**Example 1.2.1**

The following matrices are in row-echelon form (for any choice of numbers in \*-positions).

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & * & * & * \\ 0 & 1 & * & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & * & * \\ 0 & 1 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

The following, on the other hand, are in reduced row-echelon form.

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & * & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & * \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & * & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & * & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

The choice of the positions for the leading 1s determines the (reduced) row-echelon form (apart from the numbers in \*-positions).

The importance of row-echelon matrices comes from the following theorem.

**Theorem 1.2.1**

*Every matrix can be brought to (reduced) row-echelon form by a sequence of elementary row operations.*

In fact we can give a step-by-step procedure for actually finding a row-echelon matrix. Observe that while there are many sequences of row operations that will bring a matrix to row-echelon form, the one we use is systematic and is easy to program on a computer. Note that the algorithm deals with matrices in general, possibly with columns of zeros.

**Gaussian<sup>3</sup>Algorithm<sup>4</sup>**

*Step 1. If the matrix consists entirely of zeros, stop—it is already in row-echelon form.*

*Step 2. Otherwise, find the first column from the left containing a nonzero entry (call it  $a$ ), and move the row containing that entry to the top position.*

*Step 3. Now multiply the new top row by  $1/a$  to create a leading 1.*

*Step 4. By subtracting multiples of that row from rows below it, make each entry below the leading 1 zero.*

*This completes the first row, and all further row operations are carried out on the remaining rows.*

*Step 5. Repeat steps 1–4 on the matrix consisting of the remaining rows.*

*The process stops when either no rows remain at step 5 or the remaining rows consist entirely of zeros.*

Observe that the gaussian algorithm is recursive: When the first leading 1 has been obtained, the procedure is repeated on the remaining rows of the matrix. This makes the algorithm easy to use on a computer. Note that the solution to Example 1.1.3 did not use the gaussian algorithm as written because the first leading 1 was not created by dividing row 1 by 3. The reason for this is that it avoids fractions. However, the general pattern is clear: Create the leading 1s from left to right, using each of them in turn to create zeros below it. Here are two more examples.

### Example 1.2.2

Solve the following system of equations.

$$\begin{aligned} 3x + y - 4z &= -1 \\ x + 10z &= 5 \\ 4x + y + 6z &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

**Solution.** The corresponding augmented matrix is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 3 & 1 & -4 & -1 \\ 1 & 0 & 10 & 5 \\ 4 & 1 & 6 & 1 \end{array} \right]$$

Create the first leading one by interchanging rows 1 and 2

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 10 & 5 \\ 3 & 1 & -4 & -1 \\ 4 & 1 & 6 & 1 \end{array} \right]$$

Now subtract 3 times row 1 from row 2, and subtract 4 times row 1 from row 3. The result is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 10 & 5 \\ 0 & 1 & -34 & -16 \\ 0 & 1 & -34 & -19 \end{array} \right]$$

Now subtract row 2 from row 3 to obtain

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 10 & 5 \\ 0 & 1 & -34 & -16 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & -3 \end{array} \right]$$

This means that the following reduced system of equations

$$\begin{aligned} x + 10z &= 5 \\ y - 34z &= -16 \\ 0 &= -3 \end{aligned}$$

is equivalent to the original system. In other words, the two have the same solutions. But this last system clearly has no solution (the last equation requires that  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  satisfy  $0x + 0y + 0z = -3$ , and no such numbers exist). Hence the original system has no solution.

<sup>3</sup>Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777–1855) ranks with Archimedes and Newton as one of the three greatest mathematicians of all time. He was a child prodigy and, at the age of 21, he gave the first proof that every polynomial has a complex root. In 1801 he published a timeless masterpiece, *Disquisitiones Arithmeticae*, in which he founded modern number theory. He went on to make ground-breaking contributions to nearly every branch of mathematics, often well before others rediscovered and published the results.

<sup>4</sup>The algorithm was known to the ancient Chinese.

**Example 1.2.3**

Solve the following system of equations.

$$\begin{aligned}x_1 - 2x_2 - x_3 + 3x_4 &= 1 \\2x_1 - 4x_2 + x_3 &= 5 \\x_1 - 2x_2 + 2x_3 - 3x_4 &= 4\end{aligned}$$

**Solution.** The augmented matrix is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & -1 & 3 & 1 \\ 2 & -4 & 1 & 0 & 5 \\ 1 & -2 & 2 & -3 & 4 \end{array} \right]$$

Subtracting twice row 1 from row 2 and subtracting row 1 from row 3 gives

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & -1 & 3 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 3 & -6 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 3 & -6 & 3 \end{array} \right]$$

Now subtract row 2 from row 3 and multiply row 2 by  $\frac{1}{3}$  to get

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & -1 & 3 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -2 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

This is in row-echelon form, and we take it to reduced form by adding row 2 to row 1:

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & 0 & 1 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -2 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

The corresponding reduced system of equations is

$$\begin{aligned}x_1 - 2x_2 + x_4 &= 2 \\x_3 - 2x_4 &= 1 \\0 &= 0\end{aligned}$$

The leading ones are in columns 1 and 3 here, so the corresponding variables  $x_1$  and  $x_3$  are called leading variables. Because the matrix is in reduced row-echelon form, these equations can be used to solve for the leading variables in terms of the nonleading variables  $x_2$  and  $x_4$ . More precisely, in the present example we set  $x_2 = s$  and  $x_4 = t$  where  $s$  and  $t$  are arbitrary, so these equations become

$$x_1 - 2s + t = 2 \quad \text{and} \quad x_3 - 2t = 1$$

Finally the solutions are given by

$$\begin{aligned}x_1 &= 2 + 2s - t \\x_2 &= s \\x_3 &= 1 + 2t \\x_4 &= t\end{aligned}$$

where  $s$  and  $t$  are arbitrary.

The solution of Example 1.2.3 is typical of the general case. To solve a linear system, the augmented matrix is carried to reduced row-echelon form, and the variables corresponding to the leading ones are called **leading variables**. Because the matrix is in reduced form, each leading variable occurs in exactly one equation, so that equation can be solved to give a formula for the leading variable in terms of the nonleading variables. It is customary to call the nonleading variables “free” variables, and to label them by new variables  $s, t, \dots$ , called **parameters**. Hence, as in Example 1.2.3, every variable  $x_i$  is given by a formula in terms of the parameters  $s$  and  $t$ . Moreover, every choice of these parameters leads to a solution to the system, and every solution arises in this way. This procedure works in general, and has come to be called

### Gaussian Elimination

To solve a system of linear equations proceed as follows:

1. Carry the augmented matrix to a reduced row-echelon matrix using elementary row operations.
2. If a row  $[0 \ 0 \ 0 \ \cdots \ 0 \ 1]$  occurs, the system is inconsistent.
3. Otherwise, assign the nonleading variables (if any) as parameters, and use the equations corresponding to the reduced row-echelon matrix to solve for the leading variables in terms of the parameters.

There is a variant of this procedure, wherein the augmented matrix is carried only to row-echelon form. The nonleading variables are assigned as parameters as before. Then the last equation (corresponding to the row-echelon form) is used to solve for the last leading variable in terms of the parameters. This last leading variable is then substituted into all the preceding equations. Then, the second last equation yields the second last leading variable, which is also substituted back. The process continues to give the general solution. This procedure is called **back-substitution**. This procedure can be shown to be numerically more efficient and so is important when solving very large systems.<sup>5</sup>

### Example 1.2.4

Find a condition on the numbers  $a, b$ , and  $c$  such that the following system of equations is consistent. When that condition is satisfied, find all solutions (in terms of  $a, b$ , and  $c$ ).

$$\begin{aligned}x_1 + 3x_2 + x_3 &= a \\ -x_1 - 2x_2 + x_3 &= b \\ 3x_1 + 7x_2 - x_3 &= c\end{aligned}$$

**Solution.** We use gaussian elimination except that now the augmented matrix

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 3 & 1 & a \\ -1 & -2 & 1 & b \\ 3 & 7 & -1 & c \end{array} \right]$$

<sup>5</sup>With  $n$  equations where  $n$  is large, gaussian elimination requires roughly  $n^3/2$  multiplications and divisions, whereas this number is roughly  $n^3/3$  if back substitution is used.

has entries  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  as well as known numbers. The first leading one is in place, so we create zeros below it in column 1:

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 3 & 1 & a \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & a+b \\ 0 & -2 & -4 & c-3a \end{array} \right]$$

The second leading 1 has appeared, so use it to create zeros in the rest of column 2:

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & -5 & -2a-3b \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & a+b \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & c-a+2b \end{array} \right]$$

Now the whole solution depends on the number  $c - a + 2b = c - (a - 2b)$ . The last row corresponds to an equation  $0 = c - (a - 2b)$ . If  $c \neq a - 2b$ , there is *no* solution (just as in Example 1.2.2). Hence:

The system is consistent if and only if  $c = a - 2b$ .

In this case the last matrix becomes

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & -5 & -2a-3b \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & a+b \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

Thus, if  $c = a - 2b$ , taking  $x_3 = t$  where  $t$  is a parameter gives the solutions

$$x_1 = 5t - (2a + 3b) \quad x_2 = (a + b) - 2t \quad x_3 = t.$$

## Rank

It can be proven that the *reduced* row-echelon form of a matrix  $A$  is uniquely determined by  $A$ . That is, no matter which series of row operations is used to carry  $A$  to a reduced row-echelon matrix, the result will always be the same matrix. (A proof is given at the end of Section 2.5.) By contrast, this is not true for row-echelon matrices: Different series of row operations can carry the same matrix  $A$  to *different* row-echelon matrices. Indeed, the matrix  $A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -1 & 4 \\ 2 & -1 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$  can be carried (by one row operation) to the row-echelon matrix  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & -1 & 4 \\ 0 & 1 & -6 \end{bmatrix}$ , and then by another row operation to the (reduced) row-echelon matrix  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & -2 \\ 0 & 1 & -6 \end{bmatrix}$ . However, it *is* true that the number  $r$  of leading 1s must be the same in each of these row-echelon matrices (this will be proved in Chapter 5). Hence, the number  $r$  depends only on  $A$  and not on the way in which  $A$  is carried to row-echelon form.

**Definition 1.4 Rank of a Matrix**

The **rank** of matrix  $A$  is the number of leading 1s in any row-echelon matrix to which  $A$  can be carried by row operations.

**Example 1.2.5**

Compute the rank of  $A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 & 4 \\ 2 & 1 & 3 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & -5 & 8 \end{bmatrix}$ .

**Solution.** The reduction of  $A$  to row-echelon form is

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 & 4 \\ 2 & 1 & 3 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & -5 & 8 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 & 4 \\ 0 & -1 & 5 & -8 \\ 0 & 1 & -5 & 8 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 & 4 \\ 0 & 1 & -5 & 8 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Because this row-echelon matrix has two leading 1s,  $\text{rank } A = 2$ .

Suppose that  $\text{rank } A = r$ , where  $A$  is a matrix with  $m$  rows and  $n$  columns. Then  $r \leq m$  because the leading 1s lie in different rows, and  $r \leq n$  because the leading 1s lie in different columns. Moreover, the rank has a useful application to equations. Recall that a system of linear equations is called consistent if it has at least one solution.

**Theorem 1.2.2**

Suppose a system of  $m$  equations in  $n$  variables is **consistent**, and that the rank of the augmented matrix is  $r$ .

1. The set of solutions involves exactly  $n - r$  parameters.
2. If  $r < n$ , the system has infinitely many solutions.
3. If  $r = n$ , the system has a unique solution.

**Proof.** The fact that the rank of the augmented matrix is  $r$  means there are exactly  $r$  leading variables, and hence exactly  $n - r$  nonleading variables. These nonleading variables are all assigned as parameters in the gaussian algorithm, so the set of solutions involves exactly  $n - r$  parameters. Hence if  $r < n$ , there is at least one parameter, and so infinitely many solutions. If  $r = n$ , there are no parameters and so a unique solution.  $\square$

Theorem 1.2.2 shows that, for any system of linear equations, exactly three possibilities exist:

1. *No solution.* This occurs when a row  $[0 \ 0 \ \cdots \ 0 \ 1]$  occurs in the row-echelon form. This is the case where the system is inconsistent.
2. *Unique solution.* This occurs when every variable is a leading variable.

3. *Infinitely many solutions.* This occurs when the system is consistent and there is at least one nonleading variable, so at least one parameter is involved.

### Example 1.2.6

Suppose the matrix  $A$  in Example 1.2.5 is the augmented matrix of a system of  $m = 3$  linear equations in  $n = 3$  variables. As  $\text{rank } A = r = 2$ , the set of solutions will have  $n - r = 1$  parameter. The reader can verify this fact directly.

Many important problems involve **linear inequalities** rather than **linear equations**. For example, a condition on the variables  $x$  and  $y$  might take the form of an inequality  $2x - 5y \leq 4$  rather than an equality  $2x - 5y = 4$ . There is a technique (called the **simplex algorithm**) for finding solutions to a system of such inequalities that maximizes a function of the form  $p = ax + by$  where  $a$  and  $b$  are fixed constants.

## Exercises for 1.2

**Exercise 1.2.1** Which of the following matrices are in reduced row-echelon form? Which are in row-echelon form?

a)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & -1 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

b)  $\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 & -1 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

c)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & -2 & 3 & 5 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

d)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 3 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

e)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

f)  $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

b. No, no

d. No, yes

f. No, no

**Exercise 1.2.2** Carry each of the following matrices to reduced row-echelon form.

a.  $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & -1 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 & -1 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & 2 & 7 & 2 & 4 \\ 0 & -2 & 4 & 3 & 7 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 3 & -6 & 1 & 6 & 4 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

b.  $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & -1 & 3 & 1 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\ 0 & -2 & 6 & 1 & -5 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 3 & -9 & 2 & 4 & 1 & -1 \\ 0 & 1 & -3 & -1 & 3 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

b.  $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & -3 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

**Exercise 1.2.3** The augmented matrix of a system of linear equations has been carried to the following by row operations. In each case solve the system.

a.  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & 3 & 1 & 0 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -1 & 1 & 0 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

b.  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & -2 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 5 & 0 & -3 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 6 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

$$\text{c. } \left[ \begin{array}{ccccc|c} 1 & 2 & 1 & 3 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & -1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\text{d. } \left[ \begin{array}{ccccc|c} 1 & -1 & 2 & 4 & 6 & 2 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & 1 & -1 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\text{b. } x_1 = 2r - 2s - t + 1, x_2 = r, x_3 = -5s + 3t - 1, \\ x_4 = s, x_5 = -6t + 1, x_6 = t$$

$$\text{d. } x_1 = -4s - 5t - 4, x_2 = -2s + t - 2, x_3 = s, x_4 = 1, \\ x_5 = t$$

**Exercise 1.2.4** Find all solutions (if any) to each of the following systems of linear equations.

$$\text{a) } \begin{cases} x - 2y = 1 \\ 4y - x = -2 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{b) } \begin{cases} 3x - y = 0 \\ 2x - 3y = 1 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{c) } \begin{cases} 2x + y = 5 \\ 3x + 2y = 6 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{d) } \begin{cases} 3x - y = 2 \\ 2y - 6x = -4 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{e) } \begin{cases} 3x - y = 4 \\ 2y - 6x = 1 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{f) } \begin{cases} 2x - 3y = 5 \\ 3y - 2x = 2 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{b. } x = -\frac{1}{7}, y = -\frac{3}{7}$$

$$\text{d. } x = \frac{1}{3}(t+2), y = t$$

f. No solution

**Exercise 1.2.5** Find all solutions (if any) to each of the following systems of linear equations.

$$\text{a) } \begin{cases} x + y + 2z = 8 \\ 3x - y + z = 0 \\ -x + 3y + 4z = -4 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{b) } \begin{cases} -2x + 3y + 3z = -9 \\ 3x - 4y + z = 5 \\ -5x + 7y + 2z = -14 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{c) } \begin{cases} x + y - z = 10 \\ -x + 4y + 5z = -5 \\ x + 6y + 3z = 15 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{d) } \begin{cases} x + 2y - z = 2 \\ 2x + 5y - 3z = 1 \\ x + 4y - 3z = 3 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{e) } \begin{cases} 5x + y = 2 \\ 3x - y + 2z = 1 \\ x + y - z = 5 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{f) } \begin{cases} 3x - 2y + z = -2 \\ x - y + 3z = 5 \\ -x + y + z = -1 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{g) } \begin{cases} x + y + z = 2 \\ x + z = 1 \\ 2x + 5y + 2z = 7 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{h) } \begin{cases} x + 2y - 4z = 10 \\ 2x - y + 2z = 5 \\ x + y - 2z = 7 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{b. } x = -15t - 21, y = -11t - 17, z = t$$

d. No solution

$$\text{f. } x = -7, y = -9, z = 1$$

$$\text{h. } x = 4, y = 3 + 2t, z = t$$

**Exercise 1.2.6** Express the last equation of each system as a sum of multiples of the first two equations. [Hint: Label the equations, use the gaussian algorithm.]

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{a) } \begin{cases} x_1 + x_2 + x_3 = 1 \\ 2x_1 - x_2 + 3x_3 = 3 \\ x_1 - 2x_2 + 2x_3 = 2 \end{cases} & \text{b) } \begin{cases} x_1 + 2x_2 - 3x_3 = -3 \\ x_1 + 3x_2 - 5x_3 = 5 \\ x_1 - 2x_2 + 5x_3 = -35 \end{cases} \end{array}$$

b. Denote the equations as  $E_1$ ,  $E_2$ , and  $E_3$ . Apply gaussian elimination to column 1 of the augmented matrix, and observe that  $E_3 - E_1 = -4(E_2 - E_1)$ . Hence  $E_3 = 5E_1 - 4E_2$ .

**Exercise 1.2.7** Find all solutions to the following systems.

$$\text{a. } \begin{cases} 3x_1 + 8x_2 - 3x_3 - 14x_4 = 2 \\ 2x_1 + 3x_2 - x_3 - 2x_4 = 1 \\ x_1 - 2x_2 + x_3 + 10x_4 = 0 \\ x_1 + 5x_2 - 2x_3 - 12x_4 = 1 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{b. } \begin{cases} x_1 - x_2 + x_3 - x_4 = 0 \\ -x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 = 0 \\ x_1 + x_2 - x_3 + x_4 = 0 \\ x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 = 0 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{c. } \begin{cases} x_1 - x_2 + x_3 - 2x_4 = 1 \\ -x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 = -1 \\ -x_1 + 2x_2 + 3x_3 - x_4 = 2 \\ x_1 - x_2 + 2x_3 + x_4 = 1 \end{cases}$$

$$\text{d. } \begin{cases} x_1 + x_2 + 2x_3 - x_4 = 4 \\ 3x_2 - x_3 + 4x_4 = 2 \\ x_1 + 2x_2 - 3x_3 + 5x_4 = 0 \\ x_1 + x_2 - 5x_3 + 6x_4 = -3 \end{cases}$$



- 
- b.  $x_1 = 0, x_2 = -t, x_3 = 0, x_4 = t$   
 d.  $x_1 = 1, x_2 = 1 - t, x_3 = 1 + t, x_4 = t$

**Exercise 1.2.8** In each of the following, find (if possible) conditions on  $a$  and  $b$  such that the system has no solution, one solution, and infinitely many solutions.

- a)  $x - 2y = 1$   
 $ax + by = 5$   
 b)  $x + by = -1$   
 $ax + 2y = 5$   
 c)  $x - by = -1$   
 $x + ay = 3$   
 d)  $ax + y = 1$   
 $2x + y = b$
- 

- b. If  $ab \neq 2$ , unique solution  $x = \frac{-2-5b}{2-ab}, y = \frac{a+5}{2-ab}$ .  
 If  $ab = 2$ : no solution if  $a \neq -5$ ; if  $a = -5$ , the solutions are  $x = -1 + \frac{2}{5}t, y = t$ .  
 d. If  $a \neq 2$ , unique solution  $x = \frac{1-b}{a-2}, y = \frac{ab-2}{a-2}$ . If  $a = 2$ , no solution if  $b \neq 1$ ; if  $b = 1$ , the solutions are  $x = \frac{1}{2}(1-t), y = t$ .

**Exercise 1.2.9** In each of the following, find (if possible) conditions on  $a, b$ , and  $c$  such that the system has no solution, one solution, or infinitely many solutions.

- a)  $3x + y - z = a$   
 $x - y + 2z = b$   
 $5x + 3y - 4z = c$   
 b)  $2x + y - z = a$   
 $2y + 3z = b$   
 $x - z = c$   
 c)  $-x + 3y + 2z = -8$   
 $x + z = 2$   
 $3x + 3y + az = b$   
 d)  $x + ay = 0$   
 $y + bz = 0$   
 $z + cx = 0$   
 e)  $3x - y + 2z = 3$   
 $x + y - z = 2$   
 $2x - 2y + 3z = b$   
 f)  $x + ay - z = 1$   
 $-x + (a-2)y + z = -1$   
 $2x + 2y + (a-2)z = 1$
- 

- b. Unique solution  $x = -2a + b + 5c,$   
 $y = 3a - b - 6c, z = -2a + b + c,$  for any  $a, b, c$ .

- d. If  $abc \neq -1$ , unique solution  $x = y = z = 0$ ; if  $abc = -1$  the solutions are  $x = abt, y = -bt, z = t$ .  
 f. If  $a = 1$ , solutions  $x = -t, y = t, z = -1$ . If  $a = 0$ , there is no solution. If  $a \neq 1$  and  $a \neq 0$ , unique solution  $x = \frac{a-1}{a}, y = 0, z = \frac{-1}{a}$ .

**Exercise 1.2.10** Find the rank of each of the matrices in Exercise 1.2.1.

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- b. 1  
 d. 3  
 f. 1

**Exercise 1.2.11** Find the rank of each of the following matrices.

- a)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 2 \\ 3 & -1 & 1 \\ -1 & 3 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$  b)  $\begin{bmatrix} -2 & 3 & 3 \\ 3 & -4 & 1 \\ -5 & 7 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$   
 c)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & -1 & 3 \\ -1 & 4 & 5 & -2 \\ 1 & 6 & 3 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$  d)  $\begin{bmatrix} 3 & -2 & 1 & -2 \\ 1 & -1 & 3 & 5 \\ -1 & 1 & 1 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$   
 e)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 2 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & a & 1-a & a^2+1 \\ 1 & 2-a & -1 & -2a^2 \end{bmatrix}$   
 f)  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 & 2 & a^2 \\ 1 & 1-a & 2 & 0 \\ 2 & 2-a & 6-a & 4 \end{bmatrix}$
- 

- b. 2  
 d. 3  
 f. 2 if  $a = 0$  or  $a = 2$ ; 3, otherwise.

**Exercise 1.2.12** Consider a system of linear equations with augmented matrix  $A$  and coefficient matrix  $C$ . In each case either prove the statement or give an example showing that it is false.

- a. If there is more than one solution,  $A$  has a row of zeros.

- b. If  $A$  has a row of zeros, there is more than one solution.
- c. If there is no solution, the reduced row-echelon form of  $C$  has a row of zeros.
- d. If the row-echelon form of  $C$  has a row of zeros, there is no solution.
- e. There is no system that is inconsistent for every choice of constants.
- f. If the system is consistent for some choice of constants, it is consistent for every choice of constants.

Now assume that the augmented matrix  $A$  has 3 rows and 5 columns.

- g. If the system is consistent, there is more than one solution.
- h. The rank of  $A$  is at most 3.
- i. If  $\text{rank } A = 3$ , the system is consistent.
- j. If  $\text{rank } C = 3$ , the system is consistent.

b. False.  $A = \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$

d. False.  $A = \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$

f. False.  $\begin{array}{l} 2x - y = 0 \\ -4x + 2y = 0 \end{array}$  is consistent but  $\begin{array}{l} 2x - y = 1 \\ -4x + 2y = 1 \end{array}$  is not.

- h. True,  $A$  has 3 rows, so there are at most 3 leading 1s.

**Exercise 1.2.13** Find a sequence of row operations carrying

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} b_1 + c_1 & b_2 + c_2 & b_3 + c_3 & & & \\ c_1 + a_1 & c_2 + a_2 & c_3 + a_3 & & & \\ a_1 + b_1 & a_2 + b_2 & a_3 + b_3 & & & \end{array} \right] \text{ to } \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} a_1 & a_2 & a_3 & & & \\ b_1 & b_2 & b_3 & & & \\ c_1 & c_2 & c_3 & & & \end{array} \right]$$

**Exercise 1.2.14** In each case, show that the reduced row-echelon form is as given.

a.  $\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} p & 0 & a & & & \\ b & 0 & 0 & & & \\ q & c & r & & & \end{array} \right]$  with  $abc \neq 0$ ;  $\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 1 & 0 & 0 & & & \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & & & \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & & & \end{array} \right]$

b.  $\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 1 & a & b+c & & & \\ 1 & b & c+a & & & \\ 1 & c & a+b & & & \end{array} \right]$  where  $c \neq a$  or  $b \neq a$ ;  
 $\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 1 & 0 & * & & & \\ 0 & 1 & * & & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & & & \end{array} \right]$

- b. Since one of  $b - a$  and  $c - a$  is nonzero, then

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 1 & a & b+c & & & \\ 1 & b & c+a & & & \\ 1 & b & c+a & & & \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 1 & a & b+c & & & \\ 0 & b-a & a-b & & & \\ 0 & c-a & a-c & & & \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 1 & a & b+c & & & \\ 0 & 1 & -1 & & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & & & \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|ccc} 1 & 0 & b+c+a & & & \\ 0 & 1 & -1 & & & \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & & & \end{array} \right]$$

**Exercise 1.2.15** Show that  $\begin{cases} az + by + cz = 0 \\ a_1x + b_1y + c_1z = 0 \end{cases}$  always has a solution other than  $x = 0, y = 0, z = 0$ .

**Exercise 1.2.16** Find the circle  $x^2 + y^2 + ax + by + c = 0$  passing through the following points.

- a.  $(-2, 1)$ ,  $(5, 0)$ , and  $(4, 1)$
- b.  $(1, 1)$ ,  $(5, -3)$ , and  $(-3, -3)$

b.  $x^2 + y^2 - 2x + 6y - 6 = 0$

**Exercise 1.2.17** Three Nissans, two Fords, and four Chevrolets can be rented for \$106 per day. At the same rates two Nissans, four Fords, and three Chevrolets cost \$107 per day, whereas four Nissans, three Fords, and two Chevrolets cost \$102 per day. Find the rental rates for all three kinds of cars.

**Exercise 1.2.18** A school has three clubs and each student is required to belong to exactly one club. One year the students switched club membership as follows: Club A.  $\frac{4}{10}$  remain in A,  $\frac{1}{10}$  switch to B,  $\frac{5}{10}$  switch to C. Club B.  $\frac{7}{10}$  remain in B,  $\frac{2}{10}$  switch to A,

$\frac{1}{10}$  switch to C. Club C.  $\frac{6}{10}$  remain in C,  $\frac{2}{10}$  switch to A,  $\frac{2}{10}$  switch to B. If the fraction of the student population in each club is unchanged, find each of these fractions. \_\_\_\_\_

$\frac{5}{20}$  in A,  $\frac{7}{20}$  in B,  $\frac{8}{20}$  in C.

**Exercise 1.2.19** Given points  $(p_1, q_1)$ ,  $(p_2, q_2)$ , and  $(p_3, q_3)$  in the plane with  $p_1$ ,  $p_2$ , and  $p_3$  distinct, show that they lie on some curve with equation  $y = a + bx + cx^2$ . [*Hint*: Solve for  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$ .]

**Exercise 1.2.20** The scores of three players in a tournament have been lost. The only information available is the total of the scores for players 1 and 2, the total for players 2 and 3, and the total for players 3 and 1.

a. Show that the individual scores can be rediscovered.

b. Is this possible with four players (knowing the totals for players 1 and 2, 2 and 3, 3 and 4, and 4 and 1)?

**Exercise 1.2.21** A boy finds \$1.05 in dimes, nickels, and pennies. If there are 17 coins in all, how many coins of each type can he have?

**Exercise 1.2.22** If a consistent system has more variables than equations, show that it has infinitely many solutions. [*Hint*: Use Theorem 1.2.2.]

## 1.3 Homogeneous Equations

A system of equations in the variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$  is called **homogeneous** if all the constant terms are zero—that is, if each equation of the system has the form

$$a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + \cdots + a_nx_n = 0$$

Clearly  $x_1 = 0, x_2 = 0, \dots, x_n = 0$  is a solution to such a system; it is called the **trivial solution**. Any solution in which at least one variable has a nonzero value is called a **nontrivial solution**. Our chief goal in this section is to give a useful condition for a homogeneous system to have nontrivial solutions. The following example is instructive.

### Example 1.3.1

Show that the following homogeneous system has nontrivial solutions.

$$\begin{aligned}x_1 - x_2 + 2x_3 - x_4 &= 0 \\2x_1 + 2x_2 + x_4 &= 0 \\3x_1 + x_2 + 2x_3 - x_4 &= 0\end{aligned}$$

**Solution.** The reduction of the augmented matrix to reduced row-echelon form is outlined below.

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -1 & 2 & -1 & 0 \\ 2 & 2 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 3 & 1 & 2 & -1 & 0 \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -1 & 2 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 4 & -4 & 3 & 0 \\ 0 & 4 & -4 & 2 & 0 \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

The leading variables are  $x_1, x_2$ , and  $x_4$ , so  $x_3$  is assigned as a parameter—say  $x_3 = t$ . Then the general solution is  $x_1 = -t, x_2 = t, x_3 = t, x_4 = 0$ . Hence, taking  $t = 1$  (say), we get a nontrivial solution:  $x_1 = -1, x_2 = 1, x_3 = 1, x_4 = 0$ .

The existence of a nontrivial solution in Example 1.3.1 is ensured by the presence of a parameter in the solution. This is due to the fact that there is a *nonleading* variable ( $x_3$  in this case). But there *must* be a nonleading variable here because there are four variables and only three equations (and hence at *most* three leading variables). This discussion generalizes to a proof of the following fundamental theorem.

### Theorem 1.3.1

*If a homogeneous system of linear equations has more variables than equations, then it has a nontrivial solution (in fact, infinitely many).*

**Proof.** Suppose there are  $m$  equations in  $n$  variables where  $n > m$ , and let  $R$  denote the reduced row-echelon form of the augmented matrix. If there are  $r$  leading variables, there are  $n - r$  nonleading

variables, and so  $n - r$  parameters. Hence, it suffices to show that  $r < n$ . But  $r \leq m$  because  $R$  has  $r$  leading 1s and  $m$  rows, and  $m < n$  by hypothesis. So  $r \leq m < n$ , which gives  $r < n$ .  $\square$

Note that the converse of Theorem 1.3.1 is not true: if a homogeneous system has nontrivial solutions, it need not have more variables than equations (the system  $x_1 + x_2 = 0$ ,  $2x_1 + 2x_2 = 0$  has nontrivial solutions but  $m = 2 = n$ .)

Theorem 1.3.1 is very useful in applications. The next example provides an illustration from geometry.

### Example 1.3.2

We call the graph of an equation  $ax^2 + bxy + cy^2 + dx + ey + f = 0$  a **conic** if the numbers  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  are not all zero. Show that there is at least one conic through any five points in the plane that are not all on a line.

**Solution.** Let the coordinates of the five points be  $(p_1, q_1)$ ,  $(p_2, q_2)$ ,  $(p_3, q_3)$ ,  $(p_4, q_4)$ , and  $(p_5, q_5)$ . The graph of  $ax^2 + bxy + cy^2 + dx + ey + f = 0$  passes through  $(p_i, q_i)$  if

$$ap_i^2 + bp_iq_i + cq_i^2 + dp_i + eq_i + f = 0$$

This gives five equations, one for each  $i$ , linear in the six variables  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ ,  $d$ ,  $e$ , and  $f$ . Hence, there is a nontrivial solution by Theorem 1.3.1. If  $a = b = c = 0$ , the five points all lie on the line with equation  $dx + ey + f = 0$ , contrary to assumption. Hence, one of  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$  is nonzero.

## Linear Combinations and Basic Solutions

As for rows, two columns are regarded as **equal** if they have the same number of entries and corresponding entries are the same. Let  $\mathbf{x}$  and  $\mathbf{y}$  be columns with the same number of entries. As for elementary row operations, their **sum**  $\mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y}$  is obtained by adding corresponding entries and, if  $k$  is a number, the **scalar product**  $k\mathbf{x}$  is defined by multiplying each entry of  $\mathbf{x}$  by  $k$ . More precisely:

$$\text{If } \mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ \vdots \\ x_n \end{bmatrix} \text{ and } \mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \\ \vdots \\ y_n \end{bmatrix} \text{ then } \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 + y_1 \\ x_2 + y_2 \\ \vdots \\ x_n + y_n \end{bmatrix} \text{ and } k\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} kx_1 \\ kx_2 \\ \vdots \\ kx_n \end{bmatrix}.$$

A sum of scalar multiples of several columns is called a **linear combination** of these columns. For example,  $s\mathbf{x} + t\mathbf{y}$  is a linear combination of  $\mathbf{x}$  and  $\mathbf{y}$  for any choice of numbers  $s$  and  $t$ .

### Example 1.3.3

$$\text{If } \mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ -2 \end{bmatrix} \text{ and } \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \text{ then } 2\mathbf{x} + 5\mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} 6 \\ -4 \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} -5 \\ 5 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}.$$

## Example 1.3.4

Let  $\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ ,  $\mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$  and  $\mathbf{z} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ . If  $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ -1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}$  and  $\mathbf{w} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ , determine whether  $\mathbf{v}$  and  $\mathbf{w}$  are linear combinations of  $\mathbf{x}$ ,  $\mathbf{y}$  and  $\mathbf{z}$ .

**Solution.** For  $\mathbf{v}$ , we must determine whether numbers  $r$ ,  $s$ , and  $t$  exist such that  $\mathbf{v} = r\mathbf{x} + s\mathbf{y} + t\mathbf{z}$ , that is, whether

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ -1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix} = r \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} + s \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} r+2s+3t \\ s+t \\ r+t \end{bmatrix}$$

Equating corresponding entries gives a system of linear equations  $r+2s+3t=0$ ,  $s+t=-1$ , and  $r+t=2$  for  $r$ ,  $s$ , and  $t$ . By gaussian elimination, the solution is  $r=2-k$ ,  $s=-1-k$ , and  $t=k$  where  $k$  is a parameter. Taking  $k=0$ , we see that  $\mathbf{v} = 2\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{y}$  is a linear combination of  $\mathbf{x}$ ,  $\mathbf{y}$ , and  $\mathbf{z}$ .

Turning to  $\mathbf{w}$ , we again look for  $r$ ,  $s$ , and  $t$  such that  $\mathbf{w} = r\mathbf{x} + s\mathbf{y} + t\mathbf{z}$ ; that is,

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = r \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} + s \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} r+2s+3t \\ s+t \\ r+t \end{bmatrix}$$

leading to equations  $r+2s+3t=1$ ,  $s+t=1$ , and  $r+t=1$  for real numbers  $r$ ,  $s$ , and  $t$ . But this time there is *no* solution as the reader can verify, so  $\mathbf{w}$  is *not* a linear combination of  $\mathbf{x}$ ,  $\mathbf{y}$ , and  $\mathbf{z}$ .

Our interest in linear combinations comes from the fact that they provide one of the best ways to describe the general solution of a homogeneous system of linear equations. When solving such a

system with  $n$  variables  $x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n$ , write the variables as a column<sup>6</sup> matrix:  $\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ \vdots \\ x_n \end{bmatrix}$ . The

trivial solution is denoted  $\mathbf{0} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$ . As an illustration, the general solution in Example 1.3.1 is

$x_1 = -t$ ,  $x_2 = t$ ,  $x_3 = t$ , and  $x_4 = 0$ , where  $t$  is a parameter, and we would now express this by saying

that the general solution is  $\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} -t \\ t \\ t \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$ , where  $t$  is arbitrary.

Now let  $\mathbf{x}$  and  $\mathbf{y}$  be two solutions to a homogeneous system with  $n$  variables. Then any linear

<sup>6</sup>The reason for using columns will be apparent later.

combination  $s\mathbf{x} + t\mathbf{y}$  of these solutions turns out to be again a solution to the system. More generally:

*Any linear combination of solutions to a homogeneous system is again a solution.* (1.1)

In fact, suppose that a typical equation in the system is  $a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + \cdots + a_nx_n = 0$ , and suppose that  $\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ \vdots \\ x_n \end{bmatrix}$ ,  $\mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} y_1 \\ y_2 \\ \vdots \\ y_n \end{bmatrix}$  are solutions. Then  $a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + \cdots + a_nx_n = 0$  and  $a_1y_1 + a_2y_2 + \cdots + a_ny_n = 0$ . Hence  $s\mathbf{x} + t\mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} sx_1 + ty_1 \\ sx_2 + ty_2 \\ \vdots \\ sx_n + ty_n \end{bmatrix}$  is also a solution because

$$\begin{aligned} & a_1(sx_1 + ty_1) + a_2(sx_2 + ty_2) + \cdots + a_n(sx_n + ty_n) \\ &= [a_1(sx_1) + a_2(sx_2) + \cdots + a_n(sx_n)] + [a_1(ty_1) + a_2(ty_2) + \cdots + a_n(ty_n)] \\ &= s(a_1x_1 + a_2x_2 + \cdots + a_nx_n) + t(a_1y_1 + a_2y_2 + \cdots + a_ny_n) \\ &= s(0) + t(0) \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

A similar argument shows that Statement 1.1 is true for linear combinations of more than two solutions.

The remarkable thing is that *every* solution to a homogeneous system is a linear combination of certain particular solutions and, in fact, these solutions are easily computed using the gaussian algorithm. Here is an example.

### Example 1.3.5

Solve the homogeneous system with coefficient matrix

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -2 & 3 & -2 \\ -3 & 6 & 1 & 0 \\ -2 & 4 & 4 & -2 \end{bmatrix}$$

**Solution.** The reduction of the augmented matrix to reduced form is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & 3 & -2 & 0 \\ -3 & 6 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ -2 & 4 & 4 & -2 & 0 \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & 0 & -\frac{1}{5} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & -\frac{3}{5} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

so the solutions are  $x_1 = 2s + \frac{1}{5}t$ ,  $x_2 = s$ ,  $x_3 = \frac{3}{5}$ , and  $x_4 = t$  by gaussian elimination. Hence

we can write the general solution  $\mathbf{x}$  in the matrix form

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \\ x_4 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 2s + \frac{1}{5}t \\ s \\ \frac{3}{5}t \\ t \end{bmatrix} = s \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{5} \\ 0 \\ \frac{3}{5} \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = s\mathbf{x}_1 + t\mathbf{x}_2.$$

Here  $\mathbf{x}_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$  and  $\mathbf{x}_2 = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{5} \\ 0 \\ \frac{3}{5} \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$  are particular solutions determined by the gaussian algorithm.

The solutions  $\mathbf{x}_1$  and  $\mathbf{x}_2$  in Example 1.3.5 are denoted as follows:

### Definition 1.5 Basic Solutions

The gaussian algorithm systematically produces solutions to any homogeneous linear system, called **basic solutions**, one for every parameter.

Moreover, the algorithm gives a routine way to express *every* solution as a linear combination of basic solutions as in Example 1.3.5, where the general solution  $\mathbf{x}$  becomes

$$\mathbf{x} = s \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{5} \\ 0 \\ \frac{3}{5} \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = s \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + \frac{1}{5}t \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 3 \\ 5 \end{bmatrix}$$

Hence by introducing a new parameter  $r = t/5$  we can multiply the original basic solution  $\mathbf{x}_2$  by 5 and so eliminate fractions. For this reason:

#### Convention:

Any nonzero scalar multiple of a basic solution will still be called a basic solution.

In the same way, the gaussian algorithm produces basic solutions to *every* homogeneous system, one for each parameter (there are *no* basic solutions if the system has only the trivial solution). Moreover every solution is given by the algorithm as a linear combination of these basic solutions (as in Example 1.3.5). If  $A$  has rank  $r$ , Theorem 1.2.2 shows that there are exactly  $n - r$  parameters, and so  $n - r$  basic solutions. This proves:

### Theorem 1.3.2

Let  $A$  be an  $m \times n$  matrix of rank  $r$ , and consider the homogeneous system in  $n$  variables with  $A$  as coefficient matrix. Then:

1. The system has exactly  $n - r$  basic solutions, one for each parameter.



2. Every solution is a linear combination of these basic solutions.

### Example 1.3.6

Find basic solutions of the homogeneous system with coefficient matrix  $A$ , and express every solution as a linear combination of the basic solutions, where

$$A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -3 & 0 & 2 & 2 \\ -2 & 6 & 1 & 2 & -5 \\ 3 & -9 & -1 & 0 & 7 \\ -3 & 9 & 2 & 6 & -8 \end{bmatrix}$$

**Solution.** The reduction of the augmented matrix to reduced row-echelon form is

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccccc|c} 1 & -3 & 0 & 2 & 2 & 0 \\ -2 & 6 & 1 & 2 & -5 & 0 \\ 3 & -9 & -1 & 0 & 7 & 0 \\ -3 & 9 & 2 & 6 & -8 & 0 \end{array} \right] \rightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{ccccc|c} 1 & -3 & 0 & 2 & 2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 6 & -1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

so the general solution is  $x_1 = 3r - 2s - 2t$ ,  $x_2 = r$ ,  $x_3 = -6s + t$ ,  $x_4 = s$ , and  $x_5 = t$  where  $r$ ,  $s$ , and  $t$  are parameters. In matrix form this is

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \\ x_4 \\ x_5 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 3r - 2s - 2t \\ r \\ -6s + t \\ s \\ t \end{bmatrix} = r \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + s \begin{bmatrix} -2 \\ 0 \\ -6 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} -2 \\ 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Hence basic solutions are

$$\mathbf{x}_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{x}_2 = \begin{bmatrix} -2 \\ 0 \\ -6 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{x}_3 = \begin{bmatrix} -2 \\ 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

## Exercises for 1.3

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**Exercise 1.3.1** Consider the following statements about a system of linear equations with augmented matrix  $A$ . In each case either prove the statement or give an example for which it is false.

- If the system is homogeneous, every solution is trivial.
- If the system has a nontrivial solution, it cannot be homogeneous.
- If there exists a trivial solution, the system is homogeneous.
- If the system is consistent, it must be homogeneous.

Now assume that the system is homogeneous.

- If there exists a nontrivial solution, there is no trivial solution.
- If there exists a solution, there are infinitely many solutions.
- If there exist nontrivial solutions, the row-echelon form of  $A$  has a row of zeros.
- If the row-echelon form of  $A$  has a row of zeros, there exist nontrivial solutions.
- If a row operation is applied to the system, the new system is also homogeneous.

b. False.  $A = \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{array} \right]$

d. False.  $A = \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{array} \right]$

f. False.  $A = \left[ \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{array} \right]$

h. False.  $A = \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right]$

**Exercise 1.3.2** In each of the following, find all values of  $a$  for which the system has nontrivial solutions, and determine all solutions in each case.

a)  $\begin{cases} x - 2y + z = 0 \\ x + ay - 3z = 0 \\ -x + 6y - 5z = 0 \end{cases}$       b)  $\begin{cases} x + 2y + z = 0 \\ x + 3y + 6z = 0 \\ 2x + 3y + az = 0 \end{cases}$

c)  $\begin{cases} x + y - z = 0 \\ ay - z = 0 \\ x + y + az = 0 \end{cases}$       d)  $\begin{cases} ax + y + z = 0 \\ x + y - z = 0 \\ x + y + az = 0 \end{cases}$

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b.  $a = -3, x = 9t, y = -5t, z = t$

d.  $a = 1, x = -t, y = t, z = 0$ ; or  $a = -1, x = t, y = 0, z = t$

**Exercise 1.3.3** Let  $\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{bmatrix}$ ,  $\mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$ , and

$\mathbf{z} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ -2 \end{bmatrix}$ . In each case, either write  $\mathbf{v}$  as a linear combination of  $\mathbf{x}$ ,  $\mathbf{y}$ , and  $\mathbf{z}$ , or show that it is not such a linear combination.

a)  $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ -3 \end{bmatrix}$       b)  $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 4 \\ 3 \\ -4 \end{bmatrix}$

c)  $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$       d)  $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 0 \\ 3 \end{bmatrix}$

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b. Not a linear combination.

d.  $\mathbf{v} = \mathbf{x} + 2\mathbf{y} - \mathbf{z}$

**Exercise 1.3.4** In each case, either express  $\mathbf{y}$  as a linear combination of  $\mathbf{a}_1$ ,  $\mathbf{a}_2$ , and  $\mathbf{a}_3$ , or show that it is not such a linear combination. Here:

$$\mathbf{a}_1 = \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 3 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{a}_2 = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 1 \\ 2 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{a}_3 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\text{a) } \mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ 4 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \qquad \text{b) } \mathbf{y} = \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 9 \\ 2 \\ 6 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\text{b. } \mathbf{y} = 2\mathbf{a}_1 - \mathbf{a}_2 + 4\mathbf{a}_3.$$

**Exercise 1.3.5** For each of the following homogeneous systems, find a set of basic solutions and express the general solution as a linear combination of these basic solutions.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{a. } & x_1 + 2x_2 - x_3 + 2x_4 + x_5 = 0 \\ & x_1 + 2x_2 + 2x_3 + x_5 = 0 \\ & 2x_1 + 4x_2 - 2x_3 + 3x_4 + x_5 = 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{b. } & x_1 + 2x_2 - x_3 + x_4 + x_5 = 0 \\ & -x_1 - 2x_2 + 2x_3 + x_5 = 0 \\ & -x_1 - 2x_2 + 3x_3 + x_4 + 3x_5 = 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{c. } & x_1 + x_2 - x_3 + 2x_4 + x_5 = 0 \\ & x_1 + 2x_2 - x_3 + x_4 + x_5 = 0 \\ & 2x_1 + 3x_2 - x_3 + 2x_4 + x_5 = 0 \\ & 4x_1 + 5x_2 - 2x_3 + 5x_4 + 2x_5 = 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{d. } & x_1 + x_2 - 2x_3 - 2x_4 + 2x_5 = 0 \\ & 2x_1 + 2x_2 - 4x_3 - 4x_4 + x_5 = 0 \\ & x_1 - x_2 + 2x_3 + 4x_4 + x_5 = 0 \\ & -2x_1 - 4x_2 + 8x_3 + 10x_4 + x_5 = 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{b. } r \begin{bmatrix} -2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + s \begin{bmatrix} -2 \\ 0 \\ -1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} -3 \\ 0 \\ -2 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\text{d. } s \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} + t \begin{bmatrix} -1 \\ 3 \\ 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

**Exercise 1.3.6**

- a. Does Theorem 1.3.1 imply that the system
- $$\begin{cases} -z + 3y = 0 \\ 2x - 6y = 0 \end{cases}$$
- has nontrivial solutions? Explain.

- b. Show that the converse to Theorem 1.3.1 is not true. That is, show that the existence of nontrivial solutions does *not* imply that there are more variables than equations.

- b. The system in (a) has nontrivial solutions.

**Exercise 1.3.7** In each case determine how many solutions (and how many parameters) are possible for a homogeneous system of four linear equations in six variables with augmented matrix  $A$ . Assume that  $A$  has nonzero entries. Give all possibilities.

- a) Rank  $A = 2$ .                      b) Rank  $A = 1$ .  
 c)  $A$  has a row of zeros.  
 d) The row-echelon form of  $A$  has a row of zeros.

- b. By Theorem 1.2.2, there are  $n - r = 6 - 1 = 5$  parameters and thus infinitely many solutions.

- d. If  $R$  is the row-echelon form of  $A$ , then  $R$  has a row of zeros and 4 rows in all. Hence  $R$  has  $r = \text{rank } A = 1, 2, \text{ or } 3$ . Thus there are  $n - r = 6 - r = 5, 4, \text{ or } 3$  parameters and thus infinitely many solutions.

**Exercise 1.3.8** The graph of an equation  $ax + by + cz = 0$  is a plane through the origin (provided that not all of  $a, b,$  and  $c$  are zero). Use Theorem 1.3.1 to show that two planes through the origin have a point in common other than the origin  $(0, 0, 0)$ .

**Exercise 1.3.9**

- a. Show that there is a line through any pair of points in the plane. [*Hint*: Every line has equation  $ax + by + c = 0$ , where  $a, b,$  and  $c$  are not all zero.]  
 b. Generalize and show that there is a plane  $ax + by + cz + d = 0$  through any three points in space.

- b. That the graph of  $ax + by + cz = d$  contains three points leads to 3 linear equations homogeneous in variables  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $d$ . Apply Theorem 1.3.1.

**Exercise 1.3.10** The graph of

$$a(x^2 + y^2) + bx + cy + d = 0$$

is a circle if  $a \neq 0$ . Show that there is a circle through any three points in the plane that are not all on a line.

**Exercise 1.3.11** Consider a homogeneous system of linear equations in  $n$  variables, and suppose that the augmented matrix has rank  $r$ . Show that the system has nontrivial solutions if and only if  $n > r$ .

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There are  $n - r$  parameters (Theorem 1.2.2), so there are nontrivial solutions if and only if  $n - r > 0$ .

**Exercise 1.3.12** If a consistent (possibly non-homogeneous) system of linear equations has more variables than equations, prove that it has more than one solution.

## Supplementary Exercises for Chapter 1

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**Exercise 1.1** We show in Chapter 4 that the graph of an equation  $ax + by + cz = d$  is a plane in space when not all of  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  are zero.

- By examining the possible positions of planes in space, show that three equations in three variables can have zero, one, or infinitely many solutions.
  - Can two equations in three variables have a unique solution? Give reasons for your answer.
- 

- No. If the corresponding planes are parallel and distinct, there is no solution. Otherwise they either coincide or have a whole common line of solutions, that is, at least one parameter.

**Exercise 1.2** Find all solutions to the following systems of linear equations.

- $$\begin{aligned} x_1 + x_2 + x_3 - x_4 &= 3 \\ 3x_1 + 5x_2 - 2x_3 + x_4 &= 1 \\ -3x_1 - 7x_2 + 7x_3 - 5x_4 &= 7 \\ x_1 + 3x_2 - 4x_3 + 3x_4 &= -5 \end{aligned}$$

- $$\begin{aligned} x_1 + 4x_2 - x_3 + x_4 &= 2 \\ 3x_1 + 2x_2 + x_3 + 2x_4 &= 5 \\ x_1 - 6x_2 + 3x_3 &= 1 \\ x_1 + 14x_2 - 5x_3 + 2x_4 &= 3 \end{aligned}$$

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- $$x_1 = \frac{1}{10}(-6s - 6t + 16), x_2 = \frac{1}{10}(4s - t + 1), x_3 = s, x_4 = t$$

**Exercise 1.3** In each case find (if possible) conditions on  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  such that the system has zero, one, or infinitely many solutions.

- $$\begin{aligned} x + 2y - 4z &= 4 & \text{b) } x + y + 3z &= a \\ 3x - y + 13z &= 2 & ax + y + 5z &= 4 \\ 4x + y + a^2z &= a + 3 & x + ay + 4z &= a \end{aligned}$$

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- If  $a = 1$ , no solution. If  $a = 2$ ,  $x = 2 - 2t$ ,  $y = -t$ ,  $z = t$ . If  $a \neq 1$  and  $a \neq 2$ , the unique solution is  $x = \frac{8-5a}{3(a-1)}$ ,  $y = \frac{-2-a}{3(a-1)}$ ,  $z = \frac{a+2}{3}$

**Exercise 1.4** Show that any two rows of a matrix can be interchanged by elementary row transformations of the other two types.

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{bmatrix} R_1 \\ R_2 \end{bmatrix} &\rightarrow \\ \begin{bmatrix} R_1 + R_2 \\ R_2 \end{bmatrix} &\rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} R_1 + R_2 \\ -R_1 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} R_2 \\ -R_1 \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow \begin{bmatrix} R_2 \\ R_1 \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

**Exercise 1.5** If  $ad \neq bc$ , show that  $\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}$  has reduced row-echelon form  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ .

**Exercise 1.6** Find  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  so that the system

$$\begin{aligned} x + ay + cz &= 0 \\ bx + cy - 3z &= 1 \\ ax + 2y + bz &= 5 \end{aligned}$$

has the solution  $x = 3$ ,  $y = -1$ ,  $z = 2$ .

$$a = 1, b = 2, c = -1$$

**Exercise 1.7** Solve the system

$$\begin{aligned} x + 2y + 2z &= -3 \\ 2x + y + z &= -4 \\ x - y + iz &= i \end{aligned}$$

where  $i^2 = -1$ . [See Appendix ??.]

**Exercise 1.8** Show that the *real* system

$$\begin{cases} x + y + z = 5 \\ 2x - y - z = 1 \\ -3x + 2y + 2z = 0 \end{cases}$$

has a *complex* solution:  $x = 2$ ,  $y = i$ ,  $z = 3 - i$  where  $i^2 = -1$ . Explain. What happens when such a real system has a unique solution?

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The (real) solution is  $x = 2$ ,  $y = 3 - t$ ,  $z = t$  where  $t$  is a parameter. The given complex solution occurs when  $t = 3 - i$  is complex. If the real system has a unique solution, that solution is real because the coefficients and constants are all real.

**Exercise 1.9** A man is ordered by his doctor to take 5 units of vitamin A, 13 units of vitamin B, and 23 units of vitamin C each day. Three brands of vitamin pills are available, and the number of units of each vitamin per pill are shown in the accompanying table.

Brand	Vitamin		
	A	B	C
1	1	2	4
2	1	1	3
3	0	1	1

- Find all combinations of pills that provide exactly the required amount of vitamins (no partial pills allowed).
- If brands 1, 2, and 3 cost 3¢, 2¢, and 5¢ per pill, respectively, find the least expensive treatment.

- 
- 5 of brand 1, 0 of brand 2, 3 of brand 3

**Exercise 1.10** A restaurant owner plans to use  $x$  tables seating 4,  $y$  tables seating 6, and  $z$  tables seating 8, for a total of 20 tables. When fully occupied, the tables seat 108 customers. If only half of the  $x$  tables, half of the  $y$  tables, and one-fourth of

the  $z$  tables are used, each fully occupied, then 46 customers will be seated. Find  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ .

**Exercise 1.11**

- Show that a matrix with two rows and two columns that is in reduced row-echelon form must have one of the following forms:

$$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & * \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

[Hint: The leading 1 in the first row must be in column 1 or 2 or not exist.]

- List the seven reduced row-echelon forms for matrices with two rows and three columns.
- List the four reduced row-echelon forms for matrices with three rows and two columns.

**Exercise 1.12** An amusement park charges \$7 for adults, \$2 for youths, and \$0.50 for children. If 150 people enter and pay a total of \$100, find the numbers of adults, youths, and children. [Hint: These numbers are nonnegative *integers*.]

**Exercise 1.13** Solve the following system of equations for  $x$  and  $y$ .

$$\begin{aligned} x^2 + xy - y^2 &= 1 \\ 2x^2 - xy + 3y^2 &= 13 \\ x^2 + 3xy + 2y^2 &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

[Hint: These equations are linear in the new variables  $x_1 = x^2$ ,  $x_2 = xy$ , and  $x_3 = y^2$ .]

