Sections 2.7 and 2.9

Basis, Dimension, Rank and Basis Theorems

Recall: a subspace of $\mathbf{R}^n$ is the same thing as a span, except we haven't computed a spanning set yet.

For example, $\operatorname{Col} A$ and $\operatorname{Nul} A$ for a matrix A.

There are lots of choices of spanning set for a given subspace.

Are some better than others?

Basis of a Subspace

What is the *smallest number* of vectors that are needed to span a subspace?

Definition

Let V be a subspace of $\mathbf{R}^n$. A **basis** of V is a set of vectors $\{v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_m\}$ in V such that:

1. $V = \text{Span}\{v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_m\}$, and
2. $\{v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_m\}$ is linearly independent.

The number of vectors in a basis is the **dimension** of V, and is written $\dim V$.

Note the big red border here

Why is a basis the smallest number of vectors needed to span?

Recall: *linearly independent* means that every time you add another vector, the span gets bigger.

Hence, if we remove any vector, the span gets *smaller*: so any smaller set can't span V.

Important

A subspace has *many different* bases, but they all have the same number of vectors.

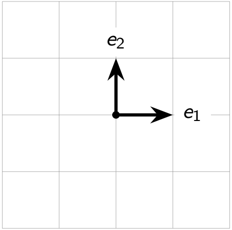
Bases of $\mathbf{R}^2$

Question

What is a basis for $\mathbf{R}^2$?

We need two vectors that *span* $\mathbf{R}^2$ and are *linearly independent*. $\{e_1, e_2\}$ is one basis.

1. They span: $\binom{a}{b} = ae_1 + be_2$.
2. They are linearly independent because they are not collinear.

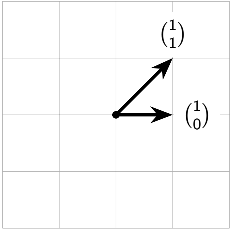


Question

What is another basis for $\mathbf{R}^2$?

Any two nonzero vectors that are not collinear. $\left\{\binom{1}{0}, \binom{1}{1}\right\}$ is also a basis.

1. They span: $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ has a pivot in every row.
2. They are linearly independent: $\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$ has a pivot in every column.



Bases of $\mathbf{R}^n$

The unit coordinate vectors

$$e_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad e_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad \ldots, \quad e_{n-1} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad e_n = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

are a basis for $\mathbf{R}^n$.

The identity matrix has columns $e_1, e_2, \ldots, e_n$.

1. They span: I_n has a pivot in every row.
2. They are linearly independent: I_n has a pivot in every column.

In general: $\{v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_n\}$ is a basis for $\mathbf{R}^n$ if and only if the matrix

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} | & | & & | \\ v_1 & v_2 & \cdots & v_n \\ | & | & & | \end{pmatrix}$$

has a pivot in every row and every column.

Sanity check: we have shown that $\dim \mathbf{R}^n = n$.

Example

Let

$$V = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{pmatrix} \text{ in } \mathbf{R}^3 \;\middle|\; x + 3y + z = 0 \right\} \qquad \mathcal{B} = \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} \right\}.$$

Verify that $\mathcal{B}$ is a basis for V. (So $\dim V = 2$: it is a *plane*.) [interactive]

0. In V: both vectors are in V because
$$-3 + 3(1) + 0 = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad 0 + 3(1) + (-3) = 0.$$
1. Span: If $\begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{pmatrix}$ is in V, then $y = -\frac{1}{3}(x + z)$, so
$$\begin{pmatrix} x \\ y \\ z \end{pmatrix} = -\frac{x}{3}\begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} - \frac{z}{3}\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix}.$$
2. Linearly independent:
$$c_1\begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + c_2\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} = 0 \implies \begin{pmatrix} -3c_1 \\ c_1 + c_2 \\ -3c_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \implies c_1 = c_2 = 0.$$

Basis for Nul A

Fact

The vectors in the parametric vector form of the general solution to $Ax = 0$ always form a basis for Nul A.

Example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & -1 \\ -2 & -3 & 4 & 5 \\ 2 & 4 & 0 & -2 \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{rref}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -8 & -7 \\ 0 & 1 & 4 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\xrightarrow{\text{parametric vector form}} x = x_3 \begin{pmatrix} 8 \\ -4 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + x_4 \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -3 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{basis of Nul } A} \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 8 \\ -4 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -3 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\}$$

1. The vectors span Nul A by construction (every solution to $Ax = 0$ has this form).
2. Can you see why they are linearly independent? (Look at the last two rows.)

Basis for Col A

Fact

The *pivot columns* of A always form a basis for Col A.

Warning: I mean the pivot columns of the *original* matrix A, not the row-reduced form. (Row reduction changes the column space.)

Example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & -1 \\ -2 & -3 & 4 & 5 \\ 2 & 4 & 0 & -2 \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{rref}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -8 & -7 \\ 0 & 1 & 4 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

pivot columns = basis ⟵ pivot columns in rref

So a basis for Col A is

$$\left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -2 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -3 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \right\}.$$

Why? See slides on linear independence.

Basis Theorem

Let V be a subspace of dimension m. Then:

- Any m linearly independent vectors in V form a basis for V.
- Any m vectors that span V form a basis for V.

Upshot

If you *already* know that $\dim V = m$, and you have m vectors $\mathcal{B} = \{v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_m\}$ in V, then you only have to check *one* of

1. $\mathcal{B}$ is linearly independent, *or*
2. $\mathcal{B}$ spans V

in order for $\mathcal{B}$ to be a basis.

Example: any three linearly independent vectors form a basis for $\mathbf{R}^3$.

The Rank Theorem

Recall:

- The **dimension** of a subspace V is the number of vectors in a basis for V.
- A basis for the column space of a matrix A is given by the pivot columns.
- A basis for the null space of A is given by the vectors attached to the free variables in the parametric vector form.

Definition

The **rank** of a matrix A, written $\operatorname{rank} A$, is the dimension of the column space $\operatorname{Col} A$. The **nullity** of A, written $\operatorname{nullity} A$, is the dimension of the solution set of $Ax = 0$.

Observe:

$$\begin{aligned} \operatorname{rank} A &= \dim \operatorname{Col} A = \text{the number of columns with pivots} \\ \operatorname{nullity} A &= \dim \operatorname{Nul} A = \text{the number of free variables} \\ &= \text{the number of columns without pivots.} \end{aligned}$$

Rank Theorem

If A is an $m \times n$ matrix, then

$$\operatorname{rank} A + \operatorname{nullity} A = n = \text{the number of columns of } A.$$

In other words, [interactive 1] [interactive 2]

(dimension of column space) + (dimension of solution set) = (number of variables).

The Rank Theorem

Example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & -1 \\ -2 & -3 & 4 & 5 \\ 2 & 4 & 0 & -2 \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{rref}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & -8 & -7 \\ 0 & 1 & 4 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

basis of Col A

free variables

A basis for Col A is

$$\left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -2 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ -3 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \right\},$$

so $\operatorname{rank} A = \dim \operatorname{Col} A = 2$.

Since there are two free variables x_3, x_4, the parametric vector form for the solutions to $Ax = 0$ is

$$x = x_3 \begin{pmatrix} 8 \\ -4 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} + x_4 \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -3 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \xrightarrow{\text{basis for Nul } A} \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 8 \\ -4 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -3 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\}.$$

Thus $\operatorname{nullity} A = \dim \operatorname{Nul} A = 2$.

The Rank Theorem says $2 + 2 = 4$.

Poll

Poll

True or False: If A is a 10×15 matrix and there is a basis of Col A consisting of 4 vectors, then there is a basis of Nul A consisting of 6 vectors.

False: if $\text{rank}\, A = 4$ then $\text{nullity}\, A = 15 - 4 = 11$.

Summary

- A **basis** of a subspace is a minimal set of spanning vectors.
- There are recipes for computing a basis for the column space and null space of a matrix.
- The **dimension** of a subspace is the number of vectors in any basis.
- The **basis theorem** says that if you already know that $\dim V = m$, and you have m vectors in V, then you only have to check if they span *or* they're linearly independent to know they're a basis.
- The **rank theorem** says the dimension of the column space of a matrix, plus the dimension of the null space, is the number of columns of the matrix.