

**Math 1553 Worksheet §2.1, §2.2**  
Solutions

**1.** Consider the system of linear equations

$$\begin{aligned}x + 2y &= 7 \\2x + y &= -2 \\-x - y &= 4.\end{aligned}$$

**Question:** What are the solutions (if there are any) to the system?

**a)** Formulate this question as a question about an augmented matrix, and then answer it. The row-reduced matrix is given below.

$$\left( \begin{array}{cc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{array} \right)$$

**b)** Formulate this question as a vector equation.  
**c)** What does this question mean in terms of spans? See the [interactive demo](#).

**Solution.**

**a)** By looking at the row-reduced matrix, it is evident, due to the presence of a constant in the augmented column next to an empty matrix row, that there are no solutions to the system of linear equations

**b)** What are the solutions (if there are any) to the following vector equation?

$$x \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} + y \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -2 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix}$$

**c)** Is  $\begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -2 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix}$  in  $\text{Span} \left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix} \right\}$ ? The picture in the interactive demo shows that  $\begin{pmatrix} 7 \\ -2 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix}$  is not in the span of  $\begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}$  and  $\begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}$ , which is the same as saying that the corresponding system of linear equations is inconsistent.

2. a) Write a set of **three** different vectors whose span is a **line** in  $\mathbf{R}^3$ .  
 b) Write a set of **three** different vectors whose span is a **plane** in  $\mathbf{R}^3$ .  
 c) Write a set of **three** vectors whose span is only a single **point** in  $\mathbf{R}^3$ .  
 d) In each of the above questions, if you form the matrix  $A$  whose columns are the three vectors, how many pivots does  $A$  have?

**Solution.**

a) Just choose any vector that spans your favorite line, then pick the other vectors to be within that line. For example, choose  $v_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ ,  $v_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ , and  $v_3 = \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ , which span the  $x$ -axis within  $\mathbf{R}^3$ .

b) Similar to above. Just choose any two vectors that span your favorite plane, then pick your third vector to be within that plane. For example, choose  $v_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ ,  $v_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ , and  $v_3 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ . The span of these three vectors is the  $xy$ -plane in  $\mathbf{R}^3$ .

c) The span of any three vectors  $v_1, v_2, v_3$  in  $\mathbf{R}^3$  must contain the origin, since  $0v_1 + 0v_2 + 0v_3$  is automatically the zero vector.  
 There is only one possibility for this answer: we must choose  $v_1 = v_2 = v_3 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$ . If our list had contained a nonzero vector, then the span would include that nonzero vector and all scalar multiples of it (including the zero vector).

d) For a) the matrix  $A$  has one pivot. For b) the matrix has two pivots. For c) the matrix has no pivots.

3. Jameson Locke has challenged you to find a hidden treasure, located at some point  $(a, b, c)$ . He has honestly guaranteed you that the treasure can be found by starting at the origin and taking steps using

$$v_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} \quad v_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ -4 \\ -7 \end{pmatrix} \quad v_3 = \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

By decoding the message, you have discovered that the first and second coordinates of the treasure's location are (in order)  $-4$  and  $3$ .

a) What is the treasure's full location?  
 b) Give instructions for how to find the treasure by only using  $v_1$ ,  $v_2$ , and  $v_3$ . Can you do the same to get the treasure by just using  $v_1$  and  $v_2$ ?

### Solution.

a) We translate this problem into linear algebra. Let  $c$  be the final entry of the treasure's location. Since Jameson has assured us that we can find the treasure using the three vectors we have been given, our problem is to find  $c$  so that  $\begin{pmatrix} -4 \\ 3 \\ c \end{pmatrix}$  is a linear combination of  $v_1$ ,  $v_2$ , and  $v_3$  (in other words, find  $c$  so that the treasure's location is in  $\text{Span}\{v_1, v_2, v_3\}$ ). We form an augmented matrix and find when it gives a consistent system.

$$\left( \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 5 & -3 & -4 \\ -1 & -4 & 1 & 3 \\ -2 & -7 & 0 & c \end{array} \right) \xrightarrow{\substack{R_2=R_2+R_1 \\ R_3=R_3+2R_1}} \left( \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 5 & -3 & -4 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -1 \\ 0 & 3 & -6 & c-8 \end{array} \right) \xrightarrow{R_3=R_3-3R_2} \left( \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 5 & -3 & -4 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & c-5 \end{array} \right).$$

This system will be consistent if and only if the right column is not a pivot column, so we need  $c - 5 = 0$ , or  $c = 5$ .

The location of the treasure is  $(-4, 3, 5)$ .

b) Getting to the point  $(-4, 3, 5)$  using the vectors  $v_1$ ,  $v_2$ , and  $v_3$  is equivalent to finding scalars  $x_1$ ,  $x_2$ , and  $x_3$  so that

$$\begin{pmatrix} -4 \\ 3 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix} = x_1 \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} + x_2 \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ -4 \\ -7 \end{pmatrix} + x_3 \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

We can rewrite this as

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

We put the matrix from part (a) into RREF.

$$\left( \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 5 & -3 & -4 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right) \xrightarrow{R_1=R_1-5R_2} \left( \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 7 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & -2 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \end{array} \right).$$

Note  $x_3$  is the only free variable, so:

$$x_1 = 1 - 7x_3, \quad x_2 = -1 + 2x_3 \quad x_3 = x_3 \quad (x_3 \text{ real}).$$

Since the system has infinitely many solutions, there are infinitely many ways to get to the treasure. In fact, we can get to the treasure using  $v_1$  and  $v_2$  alone if we wish! If we choose the path corresponding to  $x_3 = 0$ , then  $x_1 = 1$  and  $x_2 = -1$ , which means that we move 1 unit in the direction of  $v_1$  and  $-1$  unit in the direction of  $v_2$ . In equations:

$$\begin{pmatrix} -4 \\ 3 \\ 5 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} 5 \\ -4 \\ -7 \end{pmatrix} + 0 \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$