Section 3.5

Cross Product

THE CROSS PRODUCT

If **u** = (u_1, u_2, u_3) and **v** = (v_1, v_2, v_3) are vectors in 3-space, then the **cross product** or $\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}$ is defined by

$$\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v} = (u_2v_3 - u_3v_2, u_3v_1 - u_1v_3, u_1v_2 - u_2v_1)$$

or in determinant notation,

$$\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v} = \left(\begin{vmatrix} u_2 & u_3 \\ v_2 & v_3 \end{vmatrix}, -\begin{vmatrix} u_1 & u_3 \\ v_1 & v_3 \end{vmatrix}, \begin{vmatrix} u_1 & u_2 \\ v_1 & v_2 \end{vmatrix} \right)$$

DETERMINANT FORM OF THE CROSS PRODUCT

If **u** = (u_1, u_2, u_3) and **v** = (v_1, v_2, v_3), then

$$\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ u_1 & u_2 & u_3 \\ v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \end{vmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} u_2 & u_3 \\ v_2 & v_3 \end{vmatrix}\mathbf{i} - \begin{vmatrix} u_1 & u_3 \\ v_1 & v_3 \end{vmatrix}\mathbf{j} + \begin{vmatrix} u_1 & u_2 \\ v_1 & v_2 \end{vmatrix}\mathbf{k}$$

RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVING CROSS PRODUCT AND DOT PRODUCT

Theorem 3.5.1: If **u**, **v**, and **w** are vectors in 3-space, then

(a) $\mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}) = 0$ ($\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}$ is orthogonal to **u**)

(b) $\mathbf{v} \cdot (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}) = 0$ ($\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}$ is orthogonal to **v**)

(c) $\|\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}\|^2 = \|\mathbf{u}\|^2 \|\mathbf{v}\|^2 - (\mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v})^2$ (Lagrange's identity)

(d) $\mathbf{u} \times (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}) = (\mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{w})\, \mathbf{v} - (\mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{v})\, \mathbf{w}$

(e) $(\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}) \times \mathbf{w} = (\mathbf{u} \cdot \mathbf{w})\, \mathbf{v} - (\mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{w})\, \mathbf{u}$

PROPERTIES OF THE CROSS PRODUCT

Theorem 3.5.2: If **u**, **v**, and **w** are any vectors in 3-space and *k* is any scalar, then

(a) $\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v} = -(\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{u})$

(b) $\mathbf{u} \times (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w}) = (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}) + (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{w})$

(c) $(\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) \times \mathbf{w} = (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{w}) + (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w})$

(d) $k(\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{w}) = (k\mathbf{u}) \times \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{u} \times (k\mathbf{w})$

(e) $\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{0} = \mathbf{0} \times \mathbf{u} = \mathbf{0}$

(f) $\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{u} = \mathbf{0}$

STANDARD UNIT VECTORS

Recall the **standard unit vectors** in 3-space are the vectors

$$\mathbf{i} = (1, 0, 0), \quad \mathbf{j} = (0, 1, 0), \quad \mathbf{k} = (0, 0, 1).$$

Each of these vectors have length 1 unit and lie on the coordinate axes.

COMMENTS ON STANDARD UNIT VECTORS

1. Every vector in 3-space can be expressed in terms of the standard unit vectors:

$$\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3) = v_1\mathbf{i} + v_2\mathbf{j} + v_3\mathbf{k}$$

2. $\mathbf{i} \times \mathbf{i} = \mathbf{0} \quad \mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{j} = \mathbf{0} \quad \mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{k} = \mathbf{0}$

   $\mathbf{i} \times \mathbf{j} = \mathbf{k} \quad \mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{k} = \mathbf{i} \quad \mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{i} = \mathbf{j}$

   $\mathbf{j} \times \mathbf{i} = -\mathbf{k} \quad \mathbf{k} \times \mathbf{j} = -\mathbf{i} \quad \mathbf{i} \times \mathbf{k} = -\mathbf{j}$

AREA OF A PARALLELOGRAM

Theorem 3.5.3: If **u** and **v** are vectors in 3-space, then $\|\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}\|$ is equal to the area of the parallelogram determined by **u** and **v**.

THE SCALAR TRIPLE PRODUCT

If **u**, **v** and **w** are vectors in 3-space, then the **scalar triple product** of **u**, **v**, and **w** is defined by

$$\mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}).$$

COMMENTS ON THE TRIPLE SCALAR PRODUCT

1. If $\mathbf{u} = (u_1, u_2, u_3)$, $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3)$ and $\mathbf{w} = (w_1, w_2, w_3)$, the triple scalar product can be calculated by the formula

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

2. $\mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}) = \mathbf{w} \cdot (\mathbf{u} \times \mathbf{v}) = \mathbf{v} \cdot (\mathbf{w} \times \mathbf{u})$

GEOMETRIC INTERPRETATION OF DETERMINANTS

Theorem 3.5.4: Part (a)

The area of the parallelogram in 2-space determined by the vectors $\mathbf{u} = (u_1, u_2)$ and $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2)$ is given by

$$\left| \det \begin{bmatrix} u_1 & u_2 \\ v_1 & v_2 \end{bmatrix} \right|$$

GEO. INTERPRETATION OF DET. (CONCLUDED)

Theorem 3.5.4: Part (b)

The volume of the parallelepiped in 3-space determined by the vectors $\mathbf{u} = (u_1, u_2, u_3)$, $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3)$, and $\mathbf{w} = (w_1, w_2, w_3)$ is given by

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

VECTORS IN THE SAME PLANE

Theorem 3.5.5: If the vectors $\mathbf{u} = (u_1, u_2, u_3)$, $\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3)$, and $\mathbf{w} = (w_1, w_2, w_3)$ have the same initial point, then they lie in the same plane if and only if

$$\mathbf{u} \cdot (\mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{w}) = \begin{vmatrix} u_1 & u_2 & u_3 \\ v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \\ w_1 & w_2 & w_3 \end{vmatrix} = 0$$