

# Vector Geometry Review

- (1) Vector Basics - Sections 12.1 and 12.2
- (2) Dot and Cross Products - Sections 12.3 and 12.4
- (3) Lines and Planes - Sections 12.2 and 12.5

# Vectors

A **vector** is a geometric object that has magnitude (length) and direction.

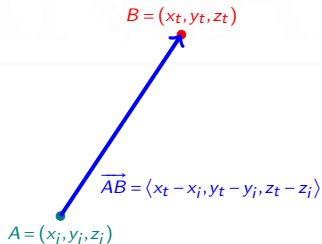
A **scalar** is a constant in  $\mathbb{R}$  which has no direction, only magnitude.

Familiar examples of vectors: force, velocity, acceleration, pressure, flux

A vector can be represented geometrically by an arrow  $AB$  from  $A$  (the **initial point**) to  $B$  (the **terminal point**). Notation:  $\vec{v} = \vec{v} = \overrightarrow{AB}$ .

Translating a vector does **not** change it, since the magnitude and direction remain the same.

These three arrows all represent the same vector!



# Cartesian Representation of Vectors

- Draw a vector  $\vec{v}$  with its *initial point* at the origin  $O$ .
- The **components** of  $\vec{v}$  are the coordinates of the *terminal point*  $P$ .



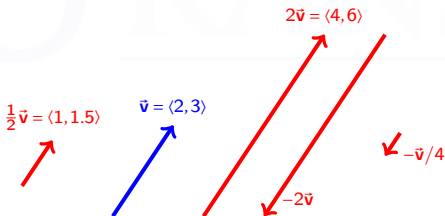
Here  $\vec{v} = \overrightarrow{OP} = \langle a, b, c \rangle$ .

In general, if  $\vec{v} = \overrightarrow{AB}$  where  $A = (x_1, y_1, z_1)$  and  $B = (x_2, y_2, z_2)$  then

$$\vec{v} = \langle x_2 - x_1, y_2 - y_1, z_2 - z_1 \rangle.$$

# Scalar Multiplication

- Multiplying a vector  $\vec{v}$  by a positive scalar  $c$  does not change its direction, but multiplies its magnitude by  $c$ .
- If  $c < 0$ , the direction of  $\vec{v}$  is reversed and the magnitude is multiplied by  $|c|$ .
- Two nonzero vectors  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$  are **parallel** if they are scalar multiples of each other (there exists a scalar  $c$  such that  $\vec{v} = c\vec{w}$ ).

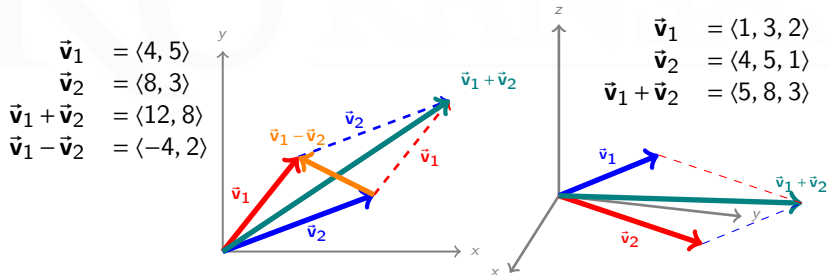


# Addition and Subtraction of Vectors

- **Algebraically**, two vectors can be added or subtracted by adding or subtracting their components.

$$\begin{array}{c} 2d \\ \langle a, b \rangle \pm \langle c, d \rangle = \langle a \pm c, b \pm d \rangle \end{array} \quad \left| \quad \begin{array}{c} 3d \\ \langle a, b, c \rangle \pm \langle p, d, q \rangle = \langle a \pm p, b \pm d, c \pm q \rangle \end{array} \right.$$

- **Geometrically**, adding two vectors can be visualized in terms of a parallelogram.



# Vector Magnitude

The **magnitude** (or **length**) of a vector  $\vec{v}$  is the distance between its initial point and terminal point:

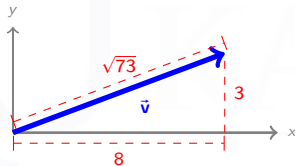
$$\vec{v} = \langle a, b \rangle$$

$$\|\vec{v}\| = \sqrt{a^2 + b^2}$$

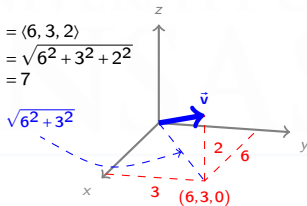
$$\vec{w} = \langle a, b, c \rangle$$

$$\|\vec{w}\| = \sqrt{a^2 + b^2 + c^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{v} &= \langle 8, 3 \rangle \\ \|\vec{v}\| &= \sqrt{8^2 + 3^2} \\ &= \sqrt{73}\end{aligned}$$



$$\begin{aligned}\vec{v} &= \langle 6, 3, 2 \rangle \\ \|\vec{v}\| &= \sqrt{6^2 + 3^2 + 2^2} \\ &= 7\end{aligned}$$



If  $\vec{v} = \overrightarrow{AB}$  with  $A = (x_1, y_1, z_1)$  and  $B = (x_2, y_2, z_2)$ , then

$$\|\vec{v}\| = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2 + (z_2 - z_1)^2}$$

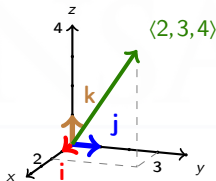
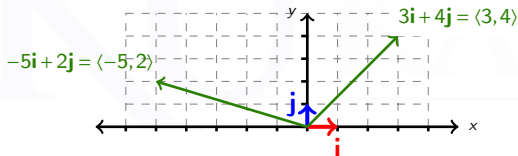
(Note: This is just the usual distance formula.)

# Special Vectors

- The **zero vector** is  $\vec{0} = \langle 0, 0 \rangle$  or  $\langle 0, 0, 0 \rangle$ .

The zero vector is the **only** vector with magnitude zero. Its direction is undefined.

- Standard basis vectors** in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ :  $\mathbf{i} = \langle 1, 0 \rangle$  and  $\mathbf{j} = \langle 0, 1 \rangle$
- Standard basis vectors** in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ :  $\mathbf{i} = \langle 1, 0, 0 \rangle$ ,  $\mathbf{j} = \langle 0, 1, 0 \rangle$ ,  $\mathbf{k} = \langle 0, 0, 1 \rangle$



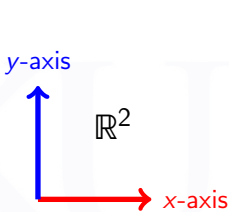
- A **unit vector** is a vector of magnitude one.

Unit vectors useful for specifying directions without magnitudes. A unit vector in the direction of a given vector can be obtained by multiplying the vector by reciprocal of the magnitude.  $\vec{u} = \frac{1}{\|\vec{v}\|} \vec{v}$

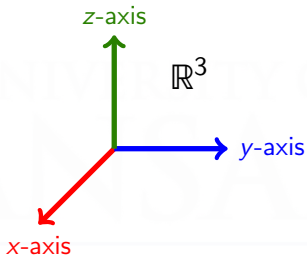
The unit vector in direction  $\langle 3, 4 \rangle$  is  $\langle \frac{3}{5}, \frac{4}{5} \rangle$ .

# Cartesian Coordinates in $\mathbb{R}^2$ and $\mathbb{R}^3$

Coordinates represent geometric objects in space by ordered pairs/triples of numbers, so that we can study them with algebra and calculus



- Reference point: the origin  $O$
- Two coordinate axes
- One plane
- Four quadrants



- Reference point: the origin  $O$
- Three coordinate axes
- Three coordinate planes
- Eight octants [▶ Link](#)



# Dot and Cross Products

In addition to vector addition and scalar multiplication, there are two other important operations on vectors.

1. The **dot product**, which takes two vectors  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$  (either both in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  or both in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ ) and produces a *scalar*  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w}$ .
2. The **cross product**, which takes two vectors  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$  (both in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ ) and produces a *vector*  $\vec{v} \times \vec{w}$ .

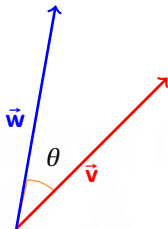
It is very important to understand the **geometry** behind the dot and cross product, not just their formulas.

# The Dot Product

The **dot product** of two vectors  $\vec{v} = \langle a_1, b_1, c_1 \rangle$  and  $\vec{w} = \langle a_2, b_2, c_2 \rangle$  is the scalar

$$\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = \|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \cos(\theta)$$

where  $\theta$  is the angle between the vectors  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$ .



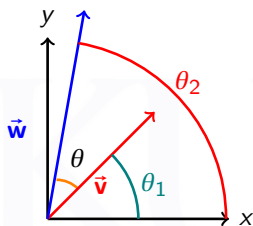
- If  $\theta$  is acute ( $0 \leq \theta < \frac{\pi}{2}$ ) then  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} > 0$ .
- If  $\vec{v}, \vec{w}$  are orthogonal ( $\theta = \frac{\pi}{2}$ ) then  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = 0$ .
- If  $\theta$  is obtuse ( $\frac{\pi}{2} < \theta \leq \pi$ ) then  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} < 0$ .

- The angle between  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$  is  $\arccos\left(\frac{\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w}}{\|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\|}\right)$ .

# The Formula for the Dot Product

Formula in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ :  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = a_1 a_2 + b_1 b_2$

Formula in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ :  $\vec{v} \cdot \vec{w} = a_1 a_2 + b_1 b_2 + c_1 c_2$



$$a_1 = \|\vec{v}\| \cos(\theta_1)$$

$$a_2 = \|\vec{w}\| \cos(\theta_2)$$

$$b_1 = \|\vec{v}\| \sin(\theta_1)$$

$$b_2 = \|\vec{w}\| \sin(\theta_2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} a_1 a_2 + b_1 b_2 &= \|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \left( \cos(\theta_1) \cos(\theta_2) + \sin(\theta_1) \sin(\theta_2) \right) \\ &= \|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \cos(\theta_2 - \theta_1) \\ &= \|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \cos(\theta) \\ &= \vec{v} \cdot \vec{w}. \end{aligned}$$

# The Cross Product

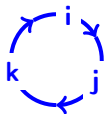
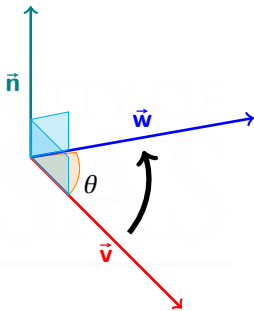
The cross product of vectors  $\vec{v}, \vec{w}$  in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  is the vector

$$\vec{v} \times \vec{w} = (\|\vec{v}\| \|\vec{w}\| \sin(\theta)) \vec{n}$$

where:

- (i)  $\theta$  is the angle between  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$ ;
- (ii)  $\vec{n}$  is the unit vector perpendicular to both  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$ , given by the **Right-Hand Rule**.

(Point the fingers of your right hand toward  $\vec{v}$  and then curl them toward  $\vec{w}$ . Your thumb will point in the direction of  $\vec{n}$ .)



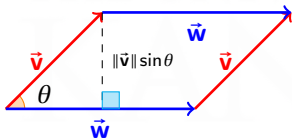
$$\mathbf{i} \times \mathbf{j} = \mathbf{k}$$

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

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

# Properties of the Cross Product

- If  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$  are parallel, then  $\vec{v} \times \vec{w} = \vec{0}$ .
- $(\vec{v} \times \vec{w}) \perp \vec{v}$  and  $(\vec{v} \times \vec{w}) \perp \vec{w}$ .
- $\vec{v} \times \vec{w} = -\vec{w} \times \vec{v}$ .
- $\|\vec{v} \times \vec{w}\|$  is the area of the parallelogram with sides  $\vec{v}$  and  $\vec{w}$ .



- To calculate the cross product of two vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ , treat them as vectors in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ :

$$\vec{v} = \langle v_1, v_2 \rangle = \langle v_1, v_2, 0 \rangle$$

$$\vec{w} = \langle w_1, w_2 \rangle = \langle w_1, w_2, 0 \rangle$$

In this case  $\vec{v} \times \vec{w}$  will always be a multiple of  $\mathbf{k} = \langle 1, 0, 0 \rangle$ .

# Calculating Cross Products with Determinants

The determinant of a  $2 \times 2$  matrix is  $\det \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix} = \begin{vmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{vmatrix}$ .

$$\begin{vmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{vmatrix} = ad - bc$$

The determinant of a  $3 \times 3$  matrix can be calculated by decomposing into a linear combination of  $2 \times 2$  matrices.

$$\begin{vmatrix} a_1 & a_2 & a_3 \\ b_1 & b_2 & b_3 \\ c_1 & c_2 & c_3 \end{vmatrix} = a_1 \begin{vmatrix} b_2 & b_3 \\ c_2 & c_3 \end{vmatrix} - a_2 \begin{vmatrix} b_1 & b_3 \\ c_1 & c_3 \end{vmatrix} + a_3 \begin{vmatrix} b_1 & b_2 \\ c_1 & c_2 \end{vmatrix}$$

**Cross Product Formula:**  $\vec{v} \times \vec{w} = \begin{vmatrix} \mathbf{i} & \mathbf{j} & \mathbf{k} \\ v_1 & v_2 & v_3 \\ w_1 & w_2 & w_3 \end{vmatrix}$

# Lines in 2-Space (Review)

A line in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  is the set of points satisfying a linear equation in  $x$  and  $y$ .

Point-slope form: The line through  $(x_0, y_0)$  with slope  $m$  is defined by

$$y - y_0 = m(x - x_0).$$

Slope-intercept form: The line with slope  $m$  and  $y$ -intercept  $b$  is defined by

$$y = mx + b.$$

(Exception: A vertical line has undefined slope and cannot be written in either of these forms; its equation is  $x = a$ .)

# Lines in 2-Space: Vector Forms

A line can also be represented using a direction vector.

The idea: specify a **point on the line** and a **direction to move in**.



- The line  $y = -\frac{x}{2} + 5$  has slope  $m = -\frac{1}{2}$ .
- When the  $x$ -value changes by **+2**, the  $y$ -value changes by **-1**.
- That is, the line is parallel to the vector  $\vec{v} = \langle 2, -1 \rangle$ .



# Lines in 2-Space: Parametrization

Every line  $L$  in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  has a **direction vector**  $\vec{v}$ :

- For any two points  $P, Q$  on  $L$ , the vector  $\overrightarrow{PQ}$  is parallel to  $\vec{v}$ .
- That is, there is a scalar  $t$  such that  $\overrightarrow{PQ} = t\vec{v}$ .
- Every nonzero multiple of  $\vec{v}$  is also a direction vector for  $L$ .
- If  $P$  is a point on  $L$ , then the line can be described by the function

$$\vec{r}(t) = \vec{r}_P + t\vec{v}.$$

(“Start at  $P$ , and then change your position by  $t\vec{v}$ .”)

- $L$  has many parametrizations, depending on the choices of  $P$  and  $\vec{v}$ .  
( $P$  is the starting point,  $t$  is time,  $\vec{v}$  is velocity.)

## Lines in 3-Space

**Lines in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  can be parametrized exactly the same as lines in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ .**  
In  $\mathbb{R}^3$ , a line is still determined by a point and a direction.



# Equations of a Line in 3-Space

Let  $L$  be a line in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ , with direction vector  $\vec{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ , containing a point  $P_0 = (x_0, y_0, z_0)$ .

**Vector form**

$$\vec{r} - \vec{r}_0 = t\vec{v} \text{ for all } t$$

$$\vec{r}(t) = \langle x_0 + tv_1, y_0 + tv_2, z_0 + tv_3 \rangle$$

**Parametric form**

$$x = x_0 + tv_1, y = y_0 + tv_2, z = z_0 + tv_3$$

These two forms are more or less the same.

The name of the parameter  $t$  does not matter.

**Symmetric form**

$$\frac{x - x_0}{v_1} = \frac{y - y_0}{v_2} = \frac{z - z_0}{v_3} \quad (\text{provided } v_1, v_2, v_3 \neq 0)$$

This form consists of two equations on  $x, y, z$ , with no parameter.

# Lines in $\mathbb{R}^3$ : Examples

**Example 1:** Find equations for the line through point  $P = (2, 3, 4)$  parallel to  $\vec{v} = \langle 5, 6, 7 \rangle$ .

**Solution:**

**Vector form**                       $\vec{r}(t) = \langle 2 + 5t, 3 + 6t, 4 + 7t \rangle$

**Parametric form**                 $x = 2 + 5t \quad y = 3 + 6t \quad z = 4 + 7t$

**Symmetric form**                 $\frac{x-2}{5} = \frac{y-3}{6} = \frac{z-4}{7}$

## Lines in $\mathbb{R}^3$ : Examples

**Example 2:** Find a vector form of the line through  $P = (2, 3, 5)$  and  $Q = (4, 2, 1)$ .

**Solution:** The first step is to find a direction vector. Use  $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ .

$$\overrightarrow{PQ} = \langle 4-2, 2-3, 1-5 \rangle = \langle 2, -1, -4 \rangle.$$

Therefore, a vector form of the line is

$$\vec{r}(t) = \langle 2+2t, 3-t, 5-4t \rangle.$$

Using the direction vector  $\overrightarrow{QP} = \langle -2, 1, 4 \rangle$  and the point  $P$  would give

$$\vec{s}(t) = \langle 2-2t, 3+t, 5+4t \rangle$$

and starting at  $Q$  instead of  $P$  would give

$$\vec{q}(t) = \langle 4-2t, 2+t, 1+4t \rangle.$$

# Relative Position of Two Lines in Space

- Two lines can be parallel. Direction vectors for parallel lines are scalar multiples of each other.
- Two non-parallel lines can intersect at a point.
- Two lines can be skew. Skew lines are not parallel and do not intersect.

▶ [Link](#)

**Example 3:** The two lines  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  given by the equations

$$\begin{array}{lll} L_1: & x = 3 - 2t & y = 1 + t & z = 4 - 3t \\ L_2: & x = -5 + t & y = 4 - t & z = 1 + 6t \end{array}$$

have direction vectors  $\vec{v}_1 = \langle -2, 1, -3 \rangle$  and  $\vec{v}_2 = \langle 1, -1, 6 \rangle$ , which are not scalar multiples — so  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  are not parallel. **Do they intersect?**

# Relative Position of Two Lines in Space

## Example 3 (continued):

$$L_1: \quad \vec{r}_1(t) = \langle 3, 1, 4 \rangle + t\langle -2, 1, -3 \rangle$$

$$L_2: \quad \vec{r}_2(t) = \langle -5, 4, 1 \rangle + t\langle 1, -1, 6 \rangle$$

To check if they intersect, solve the system of equations  $\vec{r}_1(t) = \vec{r}_2(s)$ :

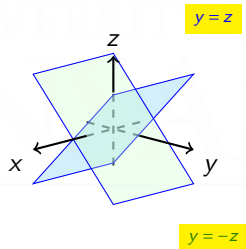
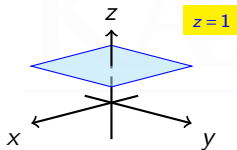
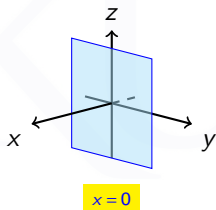
$$\begin{cases} 3 - 2t = -5 + s \\ 1 + t = 4 - s \\ 4 - 3t = 1 + 6s \end{cases}$$

(Be sure to change the name of one of the parameters, since they refer to different lines!)

- Solution:  $t = 5, s = -2$ .
- Lines  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  intersect at  $\vec{r}_1(5) = \vec{r}_2(-2) = \langle -7, 6, -11 \rangle$ .
- If the system has no solution, then the lines are skew.

# Planes in Space

If a line in  $\mathbb{R}^3$  is defined by two linear equations (in its symmetric form), what kind of set is defined by one linear equation? **A plane.**



**Question:** How do we translate between the algebraic equation of a plane and its geometric properties?



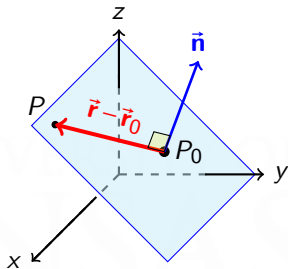
# Equations for Planes

$P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$ : point in  $\mathbb{R}^3$

$\vec{r}_0 = \langle x_0, y_0, z_0 \rangle$

$\vec{n} = \langle n_1, n_2, n_3 \rangle$ : nonzero vector

Then there is a unique plane  $F$  that passes through  $P_0$  and is orthogonal to  $\vec{n}$ .



---

Let  $P(x, y, z)$  be a general point on the plane  $F$  and let  $\vec{r} = \langle x, y, z \rangle$ .

**Vector equation** of  $F$        $\vec{n} \cdot (\vec{r} - \vec{r}_0) = 0$

**Scalar equation** of  $F$        $n_1(x - x_0) + n_2(y - y_0) + n_3(z - z_0) = 0$

The vector  $\vec{n}$  is called a **normal vector** to  $F$ .

Any nonzero multiple of  $\vec{n}$  is also a normal vector to  $F$ .

# Equations for Planes: Examples

**Example 4:** Find equations for the plane containing the point  $(7, -8, 5)$  with normal vector (i)  $\vec{n} = \langle -2, 1, 4 \rangle$ ; (ii)  $\vec{n} = \langle -2, 0, 4 \rangle$ ; (iii)  $\vec{n} = \langle 0, 0, 3 \rangle$ .

**Solution:**

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(i)} \quad & \langle -2, 1, 4 \rangle \cdot \langle x - 7, y + 8, z - 5 \rangle = 0 \\ \text{or} \quad & -2(x - 7) + (y + 8) + 4(z - 5) = 0 \\ \text{or} \quad & -2x + y + 4z = -2 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(ii)} \quad & \langle -2, 0, 4 \rangle \cdot \langle x - 7, y + 8, z - 5 \rangle = 0 \\ \text{or} \quad & -2(x - 7) + 4(z - 5) = 0 \\ \text{or} \quad & -2x + 4z = 6 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{(iii)} \quad & \langle 0, 0, 3 \rangle \cdot \langle x - 7, y + 8, z - 5 \rangle = 0 \\ \text{or} \quad & 3(z - 5) = 0 \\ \text{or} \quad & z = 5 \end{aligned}$$

## Equations for Planes: Examples

**Example 5:** Find an equation through the plane  $F$  containing the three points  $A(1, -2, 0)$ ,  $B(3, 1, 4)$ ,  $C(2, 1, -2)$ .

**Solution:** Geometrically, three points certainly determine a plane. So we need a normal vector.

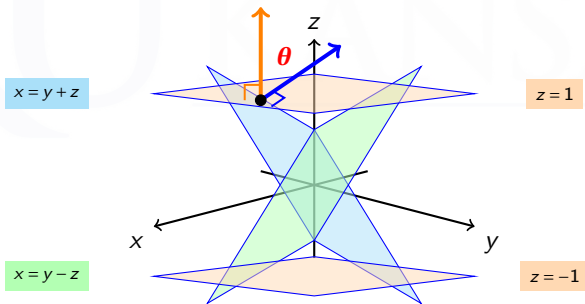
- The vectors  $\overrightarrow{AB} = \langle 2, 3, 4 \rangle$  and  $\overrightarrow{AC} = \langle 1, 3, -2 \rangle$  both lie **in**  $F$ .
- The normal vector  $\vec{n}$  needs to be orthogonal to both  $\overrightarrow{AB}$  and  $\overrightarrow{AC}$ .
- Thus, we can use the **cross product**  $\overrightarrow{AB} \times \overrightarrow{AC} = \langle -18, 8, 3 \rangle$  for  $\vec{n}$ .

One solution:  $-18(x - 1) + 8(y + 2) + 3z = 0.$

There are other possibilities:  $-18(x - 3) + 8(y - 1) + 3(z - 4) = 0$ , etc.

# Relative Position of Two Planes in Space

- Two planes are parallel exactly when their normal vectors are scalar multiples of one another.
- If two planes are not parallel, then they intersect.
  - When two planes intersect, their intersection is a line.
  - The angle  $\theta$  between two planes is the angle between their normal vectors (at most  $\pi/2$ ). If  $\theta = 0$  then the planes are parallel.



# Relative Position of Two Planes in Space

**Example 6:** Determine the line  $L$  of intersection of the planes  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  whose equations are

$$F_1: 2x - 3y + 5z = 1, \quad F_2: 3x - 4y = 7.$$

**Solution:** Normal vectors for the planes:  $\vec{n}_1 = \langle 2, -3, 5 \rangle$ ,  $\vec{n}_2 = \langle 3, -4, 0 \rangle$ .

Since  $L$  lies in both planes, its direction  $\vec{v}$  is orthogonal to both  $\vec{n}_1$  and  $\vec{n}_2$ :

$$\vec{v} = \vec{n}_1 \times \vec{n}_2 = \langle 20, 15, 1 \rangle.$$

Solve the system  $2x - 3y + 5z = 1$ ,  $3x - 4y = 7$  to get a point on  $L$ . There are many solutions; one is  $(17, 11, 0)$ .

*Answer:*

$$\vec{r}(t) = \langle 17 + 20t, 11 + 15t, t \rangle.$$