

Determinants

Consider the two linear equations for two unknowns x, y

$$\begin{aligned} xa_1^1 + ya_2^1 &= b_1 \\ xa_1^2 + ya_2^2 &= b_2 \end{aligned} \quad (*)$$

Do

$$\begin{aligned} xa_1^1a_2^2 + ya_2^1a_2^2 &= b_1a_2^2 \\ xa_1^2a_2^1 + ya_2^2a_2^1 &= b_2a_2^1 \end{aligned}$$

and subtract:

$$x(a_1^1a_2^2 - a_1^2a_2^1) = b_1a_2^2 - b_2a_2^1. \quad (*_x)$$

Do

$$\begin{aligned} xa_1^1a_1^2 + ya_2^1a_1^2 &= b_1a_1^2 \\ xa_1^2a_1^1 + ya_2^2a_1^1 &= b_2a_1^1 \end{aligned}$$

and subtract:

$$\textcolor{red}{y}(a_1^1 a_2^2 - a_1^2 a_2^1) = b_2 \textcolor{green}{a}_1^1 - b_1 \textcolor{green}{a}_1^2 . \quad (*_y)$$

We see that $(*_x), (*_y)$ have a solution no matter what b_1, b_2 are if and only if the **determinant**

$$\begin{vmatrix} a_1^1 & a_2^1 \\ a_1^2 & a_2^2 \end{vmatrix} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (a_1^1 a_2^2 - a_1^2 a_2^1)$$

of the **Coefficient Matrix**

$$\begin{pmatrix} a_1^1 & a_2^1 \\ a_1^2 & a_2^2 \end{pmatrix}$$

of $(*)$ is not zero. In that case we get

$$\begin{aligned} \textcolor{red}{x} &= \frac{b_1 \textcolor{green}{a}_2^2 - b_2 \textcolor{green}{a}_2^1}{a_1^1 a_2^2 - a_1^2 a_2^1} \\ \textcolor{red}{y} &= \frac{b_2 \textcolor{green}{a}_1^1 - b_1 \textcolor{green}{a}_1^2}{a_1^1 a_2^2 - a_1^2 a_2^1} \end{aligned}$$