

12.5 Equations of Lines and Planes in Space

- **Vector Equation for a line**

Vector Equation of a line L through $P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$ parallel to \mathbf{v} :

$$\mathbf{r}(t) = \mathbf{r}_0 + t\mathbf{v} \text{ or } \mathbf{r}_0 + \frac{t}{|\mathbf{v}|}\mathbf{v}, \quad -\infty < t < \infty,$$

where \mathbf{r} is the position vector of a point $P(x, y, z)$ on L and \mathbf{r}_0 is the position vector of $P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$.

- **Parametric Equation for a Line**

The standard parametrization of the line through $P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$ parallel to $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ is

$$x = x_0 + tv_1, \quad y = y_0 + tv_2, \quad z = z_0 + tv_3, \quad -\infty < t < \infty.$$

- **Symmetric Equations** for a Line

$$\frac{x - x_0}{v_1} = \frac{y - y_0}{v_2} = \frac{z - z_0}{v_3},$$

where $v_1 \neq 0$, $v_2 \neq 0$, $v_3 \neq 0$.

- **Line segment** from \mathbf{r}_0 to \mathbf{r}_1 is given by the vector equation

$$\mathbf{r}(t) = \mathbf{r}_0 + t(\mathbf{r}_1 - \mathbf{r}_0) = (1 - t)\mathbf{r}_0 + t\mathbf{r}_1, \quad \langle 0 \leq t \leq 1 \rangle$$

Example 1

1. Find a vector equation and parametric equations for the line that passes through the point $(-1, 0, 3)$ and is parallel to the vector $\mathbf{v} = 2\mathbf{i} - 3\mathbf{j} + \mathbf{k}$. Find two other points on the line.
2. Find parametric equations and symmetric equations for the line through $P(-3, 2, -1)$ and $Q(-1, 1, 4)$.
3. Find a vector equation and parametric equations for line segment from $(2, -1, 3)$ to $(3, 5, 1)$.
4. Show that the lines L_1 and L_2 with parametric equations are parallel.
5. Show that the lines L_2 and L_3 with parametric equations are skew.

$$L_1 : x = -6t, \quad y = 1 + 9t, \quad z = -3t$$

$$L_2 : x = 1 + 2s, \quad y = 4 - 3s, \quad z = s$$

$$L_3 : x = -2t, \quad y = 1 + 2t, \quad z = -3t$$

- **Equations for a Plane**

For arbitrary points $P(x, y, z)$ the plane through $P_0(x_0, y_0, z_0)$ normal to $\mathbf{n} = A\mathbf{i} + B\mathbf{j} + C\mathbf{k}$ has

- ① **Vector equation:** $\mathbf{n} \cdot \overrightarrow{P_0P} = 0$

- ② **Component equation:**

$$A(x - x_0) + B(y - y_0) + C(z - z_0) = 0$$

- Component equation simplified: $Ax + By + Cz = D$ with $D = Ax_0 + By_0 + Cz_0$.

Example2

1. Find an equation for the plane through $P_0(-2, 1, 5)$ perpendicular to $\mathbf{n} = 4\mathbf{i} + \mathbf{j} - 3\mathbf{k}$.
2. Find an equation for the plane through $A(0, 0, 1)$, $B(3, 0, 0)$, and $C(0, 2, 0)$.

Example3

1. Find parametric equations for the line in which the planes $3x - 6y - 2z = 15$ and $2x + y - 2z = 5$ intersect. Find the angle between those planes.
2. Show that a formula for the distance D from a point $P(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ to the plane $ax + by + cz + d = 0$ is

$$D = \frac{|ax_1 + by_1 + cz_1 + d|}{\sqrt{a^2 + b^2 + c^2}}.$$