Step 1
$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} x & x & x & x & x \\ x & x & x & x & x \\ x & x & x & x & x \\ x & x & x & x & x \end{array}\right) \rightarrow \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} x & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \end{array}\right)$$

Step 2
$$\left(\begin{array}{c|ccc|c} x & x & x & x & x \\ \hline 0 & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \end{array}\right) \rightarrow \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} x & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & 0 & x & x & x \\ 0 & 0 & x & x & x \end{array}\right)$$

Step 3
$$\left(\begin{array}{cc|cc|c} x & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \\ \hline 0 & 0 & x & x & x \\ 0 & 0 & x & x & x \end{array}\right) \rightarrow \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} x & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & x & x & x & x \\ 0 & 0 & x & x & x \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & x & x \end{array}\right)$$

FIGURE 1.1.2

so on. At each step the overall dimensions of the system are effectively reduced by 1 (see Figure 1.1.2).

If the elimination process can be carried out as described, we will arrive at an equivalent triangular system after $n - 1$ steps. However, the procedure will break down if, at any step, all possible choices for a pivot element are equal to 0. When this happens, the alternative is to reduce the system to certain special echelon or staircase-shaped forms. These echelon forms will be studied in the next section. They will also be used for $m \times n$ systems, where $m \neq n$.

EXERCISES

1. Use back substitution to solve each of the following systems of equations.

(a)
$$\begin{aligned} x_1 - 3x_2 &= 2 \\ 2x_2 &= 6 \end{aligned}$$

(b)
$$\begin{aligned} x_1 + x_2 + x_3 &= 8 \\ 2x_2 + x_3 &= 5 \\ 3x_3 &= 9 \end{aligned}$$

(c)
$$\begin{aligned} x_1 + 2x_2 + 2x_3 + x_4 &= 5 \\ 3x_2 + x_3 - 2x_4 &= 1 \\ -x_3 + 2x_4 &= -1 \\ 4x_4 &= 4 \end{aligned}$$

(d)
$$\begin{aligned} x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 + x_5 &= 5 \\ 2x_2 + x_3 - 2x_4 + x_5 &= 1 \\ 4x_3 + x_4 - 2x_5 &= 1 \\ x_4 - 3x_5 &= 0 \\ 2x_5 &= 2 \end{aligned}$$

2. Write out the coefficient matrix for each of the systems in Exercise 1.

3. In each of the following systems, interpret each equation as a line in the plane. For each system, graph the lines and determine geometrically the number of solutions.

(a) $\begin{aligned} x_1 + x_2 &= 4 \\ x_1 - x_2 &= 2 \end{aligned}$

(b) $\begin{aligned} x_1 + 2x_2 &= 4 \\ -2x_1 - 4x_2 &= 4 \end{aligned}$

(c) $\begin{aligned} 2x_1 - x_2 &= 3 \\ -4x_1 + 2x_2 &= -6 \end{aligned}$

(d) $\begin{aligned} x_1 + x_2 &= 1 \\ x_1 - x_2 &= 1 \\ -x_1 + 3x_2 &= 3 \end{aligned}$

4. Write an augmented matrix for each of the systems in Exercise 3.

5. Write out the system of equations that corresponds to each of the following augmented matrices.

(a) $\left[\begin{array}{cc|c} 3 & 2 & 8 \\ 1 & 5 & 7 \end{array}\right]$

(b) $\left[\begin{array}{ccc|c} 5 & -2 & 1 & 3 \\ 2 & 3 & -4 & 0 \end{array}\right]$

(c) $\left[\begin{array}{ccc|c} 2 & 1 & 4 & -1 \\ 4 & -2 & 3 & 4 \\ 5 & 2 & 6 & -1 \end{array}\right]$

(d) $\left[\begin{array}{cccc|c} 4 & -3 & 1 & 2 & 4 \\ 3 & 1 & -5 & 6 & 5 \\ 1 & 1 & 2 & 4 & 8 \\ 5 & 1 & 3 & -2 & 7 \end{array}\right]$

6. Solve each of the following systems.

(a) $\begin{aligned} x_1 - 2x_2 &= 5 \\ 3x_1 + x_2 &= 1 \end{aligned}$

(b) $\begin{aligned} 2x_1 + x_2 &= 8 \\ 4x_1 - 3x_2 &= 6 \end{aligned}$

(c) $\begin{aligned} 4x_1 + 3x_2 &= 4 \\ \tfrac{2}{3}x_1 + 4x_2 &= 3 \end{aligned}$

(d) $\begin{aligned} x_1 + 2x_2 - x_3 &= 1 \\ 2x_1 - x_2 + x_3 &= 3 \\ -x_1 + 2x_2 + 3x_3 &= 7 \end{aligned}$

(e) $\begin{aligned} 2x_1 + x_2 + 3x_3 &= 1 \\ 4x_1 + 3x_2 + 5x_3 &= 1 \\ 6x_1 + 5x_2 + 5x_3 &= -3 \end{aligned}$

(f) $\begin{aligned} 3x_1 + 2x_2 + x_3 &= 0 \\ -2x_1 + x_2 - x_3 &= 2 \\ 2x_1 - x_2 + 2x_3 &= -1 \end{aligned}$

(g) $\begin{aligned} \tfrac{1}{3}x_1 + \tfrac{2}{3}x_2 + 2x_3 &= -1 \\ x_1 + 2x_2 + \tfrac{3}{2}x_3 &= \tfrac{3}{2} \\ \tfrac{1}{2}x_1 + 2x_2 + \tfrac{12}{5}x_3 &= \tfrac{1}{10} \end{aligned}$

(h) $\begin{aligned} x_2 + x_3 + x_4 &= 0 \\ 3x_1 + 3x_3 - 4x_4 &= 7 \\ x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + 2x_4 &= 6 \\ 2x_1 + 3x_2 + x_3 + 3x_4 &= 6 \end{aligned}$

7. The two systems

$$\begin{aligned} 2x_1 + x_2 &= 3 \\ 4x_1 + 3x_2 &= 5 \end{aligned} \qquad \text{and} \qquad \begin{aligned} 2x_1 + x_2 &= -1 \\ 4x_1 + 3x_2 &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

have the same coefficient matrix but different right-hand sides. Solve both systems simultaneously by eliminating the (2, 1) entry of the augmented matrix

$$\left[\begin{array}{cc|cc} 2 & 1 & 3 & -1 \\ 4 & 3 & 5 & 1 \end{array}\right]$$

and then performing back substitutions for each of the columns corresponding to the right-hand sides.

8. Solve the two systems

$$\begin{aligned} x_1 + 2x_2 - 2x_3 &= 1 \\ 2x_1 + 5x_2 + x_3 &= 9 \\ x_1 + 3x_2 + 4x_3 &= 9 \end{aligned} \qquad \begin{aligned} x_1 + 2x_2 - 2x_3 &= 9 \\ 2x_1 + 5x_2 + x_3 &= 9 \\ x_1 + 3x_2 + 4x_3 &= -2 \end{aligned}$$

by doing elimination on a 3×5 augmented matrix and then performing two back substitutions.

9. Given a system of the form

$$\begin{aligned} -m_1x_1 + x_2 &= b_1 \\ -m_2x_1 + x_2 &= b_2 \end{aligned}$$

where m_1, m_2, b_1, and b_2 are constants:

(a) Show that the system will have a unique solution if $m_1 \neq m_2$.
(b) If $m_1 = m_2$, show that the system will be consistent only if $b_1 = b_2$.
(c) Give a geometric interpretation to parts (a) and (b).

10. Consider a system of the form

$$\begin{aligned} a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 &= 0 \\ a_{21}x_1 + a_{22}x_2 &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

where a_{11}, a_{12}, a_{21}, and a_{22} are constants. Explain why a system of this form must be consistent.

11. Give a geometrical interpretation of a linear equation in three unknowns. Give a geometrical description of the possible solution sets for a 3×3 linear system.

2 ROW ECHELON FORM

In Section 1 we learned a method for reducing an $n \times n$ linear system to triangular form. However, this method will fail if at any stage of the reduction process all the possible choices for a pivot element in a given column are 0.