Henceforth we will omit the zero terms in the cofactor expansion. Next, expand this 4×4 determinant down the first column, in order to take advantage of the zeros there. We have

$$\det A = 3 \cdot 2 \cdot \begin{vmatrix} 1 & 5 & 0 \\ 2 & 4 & -1 \\ 0 & -2 & 0 \end{vmatrix}$$

This 3×3 determinant was computed in Example 1 and found to equal -2. Hence $\det A = 3 \cdot 2 \cdot (-2) = -12$. ■

The matrix in Example 3 was nearly triangular. The method in that example is easily adapted to prove the following theorem.

THEOREM 2

If A is a triangular matrix, then $\det A$ is the product of the entries on the main diagonal of A.

The strategy in Example 3 of looking for zeros works extremely well when an entire row or column consists of zeros. In such a case, the cofactor expansion along such a row or column is a sum of zeros! So the determinant is zero. Unfortunately, most cofactor expansions are not so quickly evaluated.

NUMERICAL NOTE

By today's standards, a 25×25 matrix is small. Yet it would be impossible to calculate a 25×25 determinant by cofactor expansion. In general, a cofactor expansion requires more than $n!$ multiplications, and $25!$ is approximately 1.5×10^{25}.

If a computer performs one trillion multiplications per second, it would have to run for more than 500,000 years to compute a 25×25 determinant by this method. Fortunately, there are faster methods, as we'll soon discover.

Exercises 19–38 explore important properties of determinants, mostly for the 2×2 case. The results from Exercises 33–36 will be used in the next section to derive the analogous properties for $n \times n$ matrices.

PRACTICE PROBLEM

Compute $\begin{vmatrix} 5 & -7 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 3 & 0 & -4 \\ -5 & -8 & 0 & 3 \\ 0 & 5 & 0 & -6 \end{vmatrix}$.

3.1 EXERCISES

Compute the determinants in Exercises 1–8 using a cofactor expansion across the first row. In Exercises 1–4, also compute the determinant by a cofactor expansion down the second column.

1. $\begin{vmatrix} 3 & 0 & 4 \\ 2 & 3 & 2 \\ 0 & 5 & -1 \end{vmatrix}$

2. $\begin{vmatrix} 0 & 4 & 1 \\ 5 & -3 & 0 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \end{vmatrix}$

3. $\begin{vmatrix} 2 & -2 & 3 \\ 3 & 1 & 2 \\ 1 & 3 & -1 \end{vmatrix}$

4. $\begin{vmatrix} 1 & 2 & 4 \\ 3 & 1 & 1 \\ 2 & 4 & 2 \end{vmatrix}$

5. $\begin{vmatrix} 2 & 3 & -3 \\ 4 & 0 & 3 \\ 6 & 1 & 5 \end{vmatrix}$

6. $\begin{vmatrix} 5 & -2 & 2 \\ 0 & 3 & -3 \\ 2 & -4 & 7 \end{vmatrix}$

7. $\begin{vmatrix} 4 & 3 & 0 \\ 6 & 5 & 2 \\ 9 & 7 & 3 \end{vmatrix}$ **8.** $\begin{vmatrix} 4 & 1 & 2 \\ 4 & 0 & 3 \\ 3 & -2 & 5 \end{vmatrix}$

Compute the determinants in Exercises 9–14 by cofactor expansions. At each step, choose a row or column that involves the least amount of computation.

9. $\begin{vmatrix} 4 & 0 & 0 & 5 \\ 1 & 7 & 2 & -5 \\ 3 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 8 & 3 & 1 & 7 \end{vmatrix}$ **10.** $\begin{vmatrix} 1 & -2 & 5 & 2 \\ 0 & 0 & 3 & 0 \\ 2 & -4 & -3 & 5 \\ 2 & 0 & 3 & 5 \end{vmatrix}$

11. $\begin{vmatrix} 3 & 5 & -6 & 4 \\ 0 & -2 & 3 & -3 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 5 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 3 \end{vmatrix}$ **12.** $\begin{vmatrix} 3 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 7 & -2 & 0 & 0 \\ 2 & 6 & 3 & 0 \\ 3 & -8 & 4 & -3 \end{vmatrix}$

13. $\begin{vmatrix} 4 & 0 & -7 & 3 & -5 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 7 & 3 & -6 & 4 & -8 \\ 5 & 0 & 5 & 2 & -3 \\ 0 & 0 & 9 & -1 & 2 \end{vmatrix}$

14. $\begin{vmatrix} 6 & 3 & 2 & 4 & 0 \\ 9 & 0 & -4 & 1 & 0 \\ 8 & -5 & 6 & 7 & 1 \\ 2 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 4 & 2 & 3 & 2 & 0 \end{vmatrix}$

The expansion of a 3×3 determinant can be remembered by the following device. Write a second copy of the first two columns to the right of the matrix, and compute the determinant by multiplying entries on six diagonals:

$$\begin{array}{ccc|cc} & & - & - & - \\ \hline a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} & a_{11} & a_{12} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} & a_{23} & a_{21} & a_{22} \\ a_{31} & a_{32} & a_{33} & a_{31} & a_{32} \\ & & + & + & + \end{array}$$

Add the downward diagonal products and subtract the upward products. Use this method to compute the determinants in Exercises 15–18. ***Warning:*** *This trick does not generalize in any reasonable way to* 4×4 *or larger matrices.*

15. $\begin{vmatrix} 1 & 0 & 4 \\ 2 & 3 & 2 \\ 0 & 5 & -2 \end{vmatrix}$ **16.** $\begin{vmatrix} 0 & 3 & 1 \\ 4 & -5 & 0 \\ 3 & 4 & 1 \end{vmatrix}$

17. $\begin{vmatrix} 2 & -3 & 3 \\ 3 & 2 & 2 \\ 1 & 3 & -1 \end{vmatrix}$ **18.** $\begin{vmatrix} 1 & 3 & 4 \\ 2 & 3 & 1 \\ 3 & 3 & 2 \end{vmatrix}$

In Exercises 19–24, explore the effect of an elementary row operation on the determinant of a matrix. In each case, state the row operation and describe how it affects the determinant.

19. $\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} c & d \\ a & b \end{bmatrix}$

20. $\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} a+kc & b+kd \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}$

21. $\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ kc & kd \end{bmatrix}$

22. $\begin{bmatrix} 3 & 2 \\ 5 & 4 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 3 & 2 \\ 5+3k & 4+2k \end{bmatrix}$

23. $\begin{bmatrix} a & b & c \\ 3 & 2 & 1 \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} 3 & 2 & 1 \\ a & b & c \\ 4 & 5 & 6 \end{bmatrix}$

24. $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 1 \\ -3 & 4 & -4 \\ 2 & -3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} k & 0 & k \\ -3 & 4 & -4 \\ 2 & -3 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

Compute the determinants of the elementary matrices given in Exercises 25–30. (See Section 2.2.)

25. $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & k & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ **26.** $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

27. $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ k & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ **28.** $\begin{bmatrix} k & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

29. $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & k & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ **30.** $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

Use Exercises 25–28 to answer the questions in Exercises 31 and 32. Give reasons for your answers.

31. What is the determinant of an elementary row replacement matrix?

32. What is the determinant of an elementary scaling matrix with k on the diagonal?

In Exercises 33–36, verify that $\det EA = (\det E)(\det A)$, where E is the elementary matrix shown and $A = \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}$.

33. $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & k \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ **34.** $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ k & 1 \end{bmatrix}$

35. $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ **36.** $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & k \end{bmatrix}$

37. Let $A = \begin{bmatrix} 3 & 1 \\ 4 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$. Write $5A$. Is $\det 5A = 5 \det A$?

38. Let $A = \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}$ and let k be a scalar. Find a formula that relates $\det kA$ to k and $\det A$.

In Exercises 39 and 40, A is an $n \times n$ matrix. Mark each statement True or False. Justify each answer.

39. a. An $n \times n$ determinant is defined by determinants of $(n-1) \times (n-1)$ submatrices.

b. The (i, j)-cofactor of a matrix A is the matrix A_{ij} obtained by deleting from A its ith row and jth column.

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40. a. The cofactor expansion of det A down a column is equal to the cofactor expansion along a row.

b. The determinant of a triangular matrix is the sum of the entries on the main diagonal.

41. Let $\mathbf{u} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$ and $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 2 \end{bmatrix}$. Compute the area of the parallelogram determined by $\mathbf{u}$, $\mathbf{v}$, $\mathbf{u}+\mathbf{v}$, and $\mathbf{0}$, and compute the determinant of $[\,\mathbf{u} \quad \mathbf{v}\,]$. How do they compare? Replace the first entry of $\mathbf{v}$ by an arbitrary number x, and repeat the problem. Draw a picture and explain what you find.

42. Let $\mathbf{u} = \begin{bmatrix} a \\ b \end{bmatrix}$ and $\mathbf{v} = \begin{bmatrix} c \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$, where a, b, and c are positive (for simplicity). Compute the area of the parallelogram determined by $\mathbf{u}$, $\mathbf{v}$, $\mathbf{u}+\mathbf{v}$, and $\mathbf{0}$, and compute the determinants of the matrices $[\,\mathbf{u} \quad \mathbf{v}\,]$ and $[\,\mathbf{v} \quad \mathbf{u}\,]$. Draw a picture and explain what you find.

43. [**M**] Construct a random 4×4 matrix A with integer entries between -9 and 9. How is det A^{-1} related to det A? Experiment with random $n \times n$ integer matrices for $n = 4$, 5, and 6, and make a conjecture. *Note:* In the unlikely event that you encounter a matrix with a zero determinant, reduce it to echelon form and discuss what you find.

44. [**M**] Is it true that det AB = (det A)(det B)? To find out, generate random 5×5 matrices A and B, and compute det AB − (det A det B). Repeat the calculations for three other pairs of $n \times n$ matrices, for various values of n. Report your results.

45. [**M**] Is it true that $\det(A + B) = \det A + \det B$? Experiment with four pairs of random matrices as in Exercise 44, and make a conjecture.

46. [**M**] Construct a random 4×4 matrix A with integer entries between -9 and 9, and compare det A with det A^T, $\det(-A)$, $\det(2A)$, and $\det(10A)$. Repeat with two other random 4×4 integer matrices, and make conjectures about how these determinants are related. (Refer to Exercise 36 in Section 2.1.) Then check your conjectures with several random 5×5 and 6×6 integer matrices. Modify your conjectures, if necessary, and report your results.

SOLUTION TO PRACTICE PROBLEM

Take advantage of the zeros. Begin with a cofactor expansion down the third column to obtain a 3×3 matrix, which may be evaluated by an expansion down its first column.

$$\begin{vmatrix} 5 & -7 & 2 & 2 \\ 0 & 3 & 0 & -4 \\ -5 & -8 & 0 & 3 \\ 0 & 5 & 0 & -6 \end{vmatrix} = (-1)^{1+3} 2 \begin{vmatrix} 0 & 3 & -4 \\ -5 & -8 & 3 \\ 0 & 5 & -6 \end{vmatrix}$$

$$= 2 \cdot (-1)^{2+1}(-5) \begin{vmatrix} 3 & -4 \\ 5 & -6 \end{vmatrix} = 20$$

The $(-1)^{2+1}$ in the next-to-last calculation came from the $(2, 1)$-position of the -5 in the 3×3 determinant.

3.2 PROPERTIES OF DETERMINANTS

The secret of determinants lies in how they change when row operations are performed. The following theorem generalizes the results of Exercises 19–24 in Section 3.1. The proof is at the end of this section.

THEOREM 3

Row Operations

Let A be a square matrix.

a. If a multiple of one row of A is added to another row to produce a matrix B, then det B = det A.

b. If two rows of A are interchanged to produce B, then det B = − det A.

c. If one row of A is multiplied by k to produce B, then det B = $k \cdot$ det A.

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