

Theorem: Let $L(y)$ be the n^{th} order linear operator defined on page 1.

Then the dimension of $\ker(L) = n$.

(so if we can find n linearly ind. sol'ns to $L(y) = 0$, they will be a basis for $\ker(L)$, i.e. every sol'n will be a linear combo of the basis sol'ns,

$$y_H = c_1 y_1 + c_2 y_2 + \dots + c_n y_n$$

Proof:

If $y(x) \in V$

write $\vec{IV}(y) := \begin{bmatrix} y(x_0) \\ y'(x_0) \\ \vdots \\ y^{(n-1)}(x_0) \end{bmatrix}$

By the $\exists!$ theorem for IVP, \exists sol'ns y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n to $L(y) = 0$

such that

$$\vec{IV}(y_j) = \vec{e}_j = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ \vdots \\ 1 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \leftarrow \text{entry } j$$

Show $\{y_1, \dots, y_n\}$ are a basis:

• These sol'ns are linearly independent, because if

$$\begin{aligned} c_1 y_1 + c_2 y_2 + \dots + c_n y_n &\equiv 0 & (\forall x \in I) \\ \frac{d}{dx} \Rightarrow c_1 y_1' + c_2 y_2' + \dots + c_n y_n' &\equiv 0 \\ \frac{d^2}{dx^2} \Rightarrow c_1 y_1'' + c_2 y_2'' + \dots + c_n y_n'' &\equiv 0 \\ \vdots \\ c_1 y_1^{(n-1)} + c_2 y_2^{(n-1)} + \dots + c_n y_n^{(n-1)} &\equiv 0 \end{aligned}$$

called the Wronskian matrix & its det is called Wronskian

$$\begin{bmatrix} y_1 & y_2 & \dots & y_n \\ y_1' & y_2' & \dots & y_n' \\ \vdots & \vdots & \dots & \vdots \\ y_1^{(n-1)} & y_2^{(n-1)} & \dots & y_n^{(n-1)} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} c_1 \\ c_2 \\ \vdots \\ c_n \end{bmatrix} = \vec{0} \quad \forall x \in I$$

shows linear independence.

In particular, at $x = x_0$, the Wronskian matrix (above) is the identity, so $\vec{c} = \vec{0}$

• These solutions span $\ker(L)$ because if $z(x)$ solves $L(z) = 0$, then

for $\begin{bmatrix} z(x_0) \\ z'(x_0) \\ \vdots \\ z^{(n-1)}(x_0) \end{bmatrix} := \vec{b} = \begin{bmatrix} b_0 \\ b_1 \\ \vdots \\ b_{n-1} \end{bmatrix}$, the (other?) sol'n $y(x) = b_0 y_1(x) + b_1 y_2(x) + \dots + b_{n-1} y_n(x)$

has the same initial value vector!, i.e. $\vec{IV}(y) = \vec{b}$.

So, by uniqueness (in $\exists!$ theorem), $z \equiv y$!

example : Let $L(y) = y'' + y' - 30y$

Find the $\ker(L)$, i.e. the general sol'n to $y'' + y' - 30y = 0$

hint: to find a potential basis try $y = e^{rx}$

Show linear ind. of you 2 sol'ns y_1, y_2 to show they are a basis.
(Hint: you could show the Wronskian (det) is non-zero)

motivation to try $y = e^{rx}$ for any constant coefficient linear homogeneous DE:
 $a_j(x) = a_j \cdot \text{const}$

In the example above,

if we write $D(y) := \frac{dy}{dx}$
 $I(y) := y$ (identity)

then the L above can be written as

$$L = D^2 + D - 30I = (D+6I)(D-5I) = (D-5I)(D+6I)$$

and e^{-6x} solves $(D+6I)y = 0$
 e^{5x} solves $(D-5I)y = 0$

"multiplication"
of operators
means
composition
here!

this principle holds in general

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Checking for linear independence (using the Wronskian)

- Show $\{1, x, x^2\}$ are linearly ind. fns on any interval.

- Show $\{e^x, e^{-x}, e^{2x}\}$ are linearly ind. fns on any interval.

- Show that if r_1, r_2, \dots, r_n are distinct, then
 $\{e^{r_1 x}, e^{r_2 x}, \dots, e^{r_n x}\}$ are linearly independent.