In this chapter we introduce vectors and coordinate systems for three-dimensional space. This will be the setting for our study of the calculus of functions of two variables in Chapter 14 because the graph of such a function is a surface in space. In this chapter we will see that vectors provide particularly simple descriptions of lines and planes in space.

12.1 Three-Dimensional Coordinate Systems

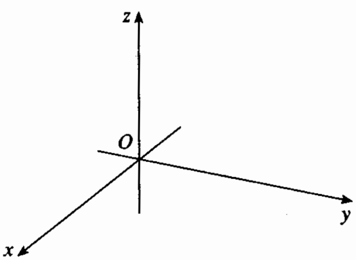


FIGURE 1
Coordinate axes

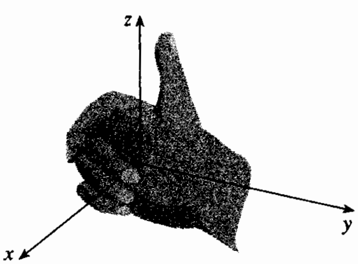
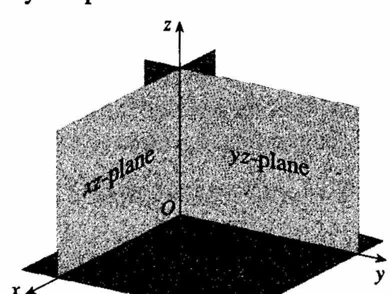


FIGURE 2
Right-hand rule

To locate a point in a plane, two numbers are necessary. We know that any point in the plane can be represented as an ordered pair (a, b) of real numbers, where a is the x-coordinate and b is the y-coordinate. For this reason, a plane is called two-dimensional. To locate a point in space, three numbers are required. We represent any point in space by an ordered triple (a, b, c) of real numbers.

In order to represent points in space, we first choose a fixed point O (the origin) and three directed lines through O that are perpendicular to each other, called the **coordinate axes** and labeled the x-axis, y-axis, and z-axis. Usually we think of the x- and y-axes as being horizontal and the z-axis as being vertical, and we draw the orientation of the axes as in Figure 1. The direction of the z-axis is determined by the **right-hand rule** as illustrated in Figure 2: If you curl the fingers of your right hand around the z-axis in the direction of a 90° counterclockwise rotation from the positive x-axis to the positive y-axis, then your thumb points in the positive direction of the z-axis.

The three coordinate axes determine the three **coordinate planes** illustrated in Figure 3(a). The xy-plane is the plane that contains the x- and y-axes; the yz-plane contains the y- and z-axes; the xz-plane contains the x- and z-axes. These three coordinate planes divide space into eight parts, called **octants**. The **first octant**, in the foreground, is determined by the positive axes.



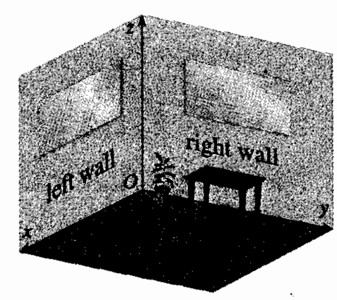


FIGURE 3

(a) Coordinate planes

(b)

Because many people have some difficulty visualizing diagrams of three-dimensional figures, you may find it helpful to do the following [see Figure 3(b)]. Look at any bottom corner of a room and call the corner the origin. The wall on your left is in the xz-plane, the wall on your right is in the yz-plane, and the floor is in the xy-plane. The x-axis runs along the intersection of the floor and the left wall. The y-axis runs along the intersection of the floor and the right wall. The z-axis runs up from the floor toward the ceiling along the intersection of the two walls. You are situated in the first octant, and you can now imagine seven other rooms situated in the other seven octants (three on the same floor and four on the floor below), all connected by the common corner point O.

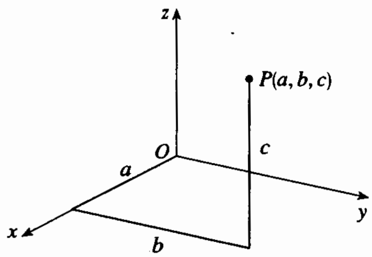


FIGURE 4

Now if P is any point in space, let a be the (directed) distance from the yz-plane to P, let b be the distance from the xz-plane to P, and let c be the distance from the xy-plane to P. We represent the point P by the ordered triple (a, b, c) of real numbers and we call a, b, and c the **coordinates** of P; a is the x-coordinate, b is the y-coordinate, and c is the z-coordinate. Thus, to locate the point (a, b, c) we can start at the origin O and move a units along the x-axis, then b units parallel to the y-axis, and then c units parallel to the z-axis as in Figure 4.

The point $P(a, b, c)$ determines a rectangular box as in Figure 5. If we drop a perpendicular from P to the xy-plane, we get a point Q with coordinates $(a, b, 0)$ called the **projection** of P on the xy-plane. Similarly, $R(0, b, c)$ and $S(a, 0, c)$ are the projections of P on the yz-plane and xz-plane, respectively.

As numerical illustrations, the points $(-4, 3, -5)$ and $(3, -2, -6)$ are plotted in Figure 6.

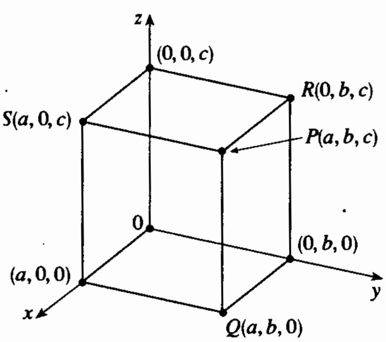


FIGURE 5

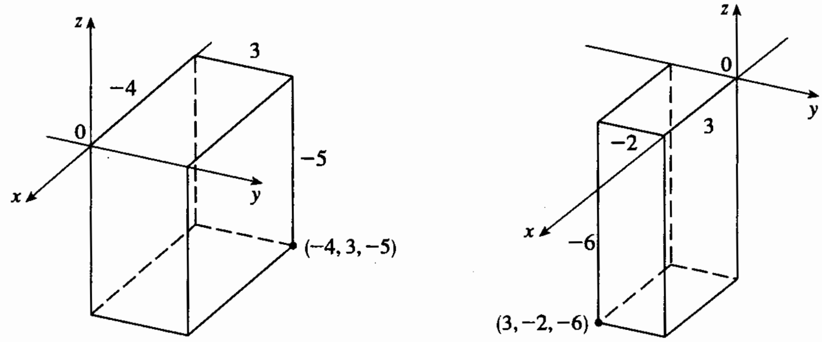


FIGURE 6

The Cartesian product $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} = \{(x, y, z) \mid x, y, z \in \mathbb{R}\}$ is the set of all ordered triples of real numbers and is denoted by $\mathbb{R}^3$. We have given a one-to-one correspondence between points P in space and ordered triples (a, b, c) in $\mathbb{R}^3$. It is called a **three-dimensional rectangular coordinate system**. Notice that, in terms of coordinates, the first octant can be described as the set of points whose coordinates are all positive.

In two-dimensional analytic geometry, the graph of an equation involving x and y is a curve in $\mathbb{R}^2$. In three-dimensional analytic geometry, an equation in x, y, and z represents a *surface* in $\mathbb{R}^3$.

EXAMPLE 1 What surfaces in $\mathbb{R}^3$ are represented by the following equations?

(a) $z = 3$ (b) $y = 5$

SOLUTION

(a) The equation $z = 3$ represents the set $\{(x, y, z) \mid z = 3\}$, which is the set of all points in $\mathbb{R}^3$ whose z-coordinate is 3. This is the horizontal plane that is parallel to the xy-plane and three units above it as in Figure 7(a).

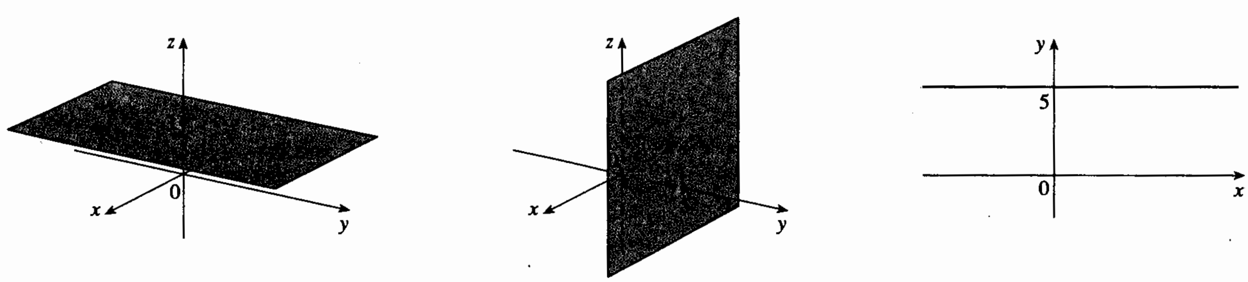


FIGURE 7 (a) $z = 3$, a plane in $\mathbb{R}^3$ (b) $y = 5$, a plane in $\mathbb{R}^3$ (c) $y = 5$, a line in $\mathbb{R}^2$

(b) The equation $y = 5$ represents the set of all points in $\mathbb{R}^3$ whose y-coordinate is 5. This is the vertical plane that is parallel to the xz-plane and five units to the right of it as in Figure 7(b).

NOTE ◦ When an equation is given, we must understand from the context whether it represents a curve in $\mathbb{R}^2$ or a surface in $\mathbb{R}^3$. In Example 1, $y = 5$ represents a plane in $\mathbb{R}^3$, but of course $y = 5$ can also represent a line in $\mathbb{R}^2$ if we are dealing with two-dimensional analytic geometry. See Figure 7(b) and (c).

In general, if k is a constant, then $x = k$ represents a plane parallel to the yz-plane, $y = k$ is a plane parallel to the xz-plane, and $z = k$ is a plane parallel to the xy-plane. In Figure 5, the faces of the rectangular box are formed by the three coordinate planes $x = 0$ (the yz-plane), $y = 0$ (the xz-plane), and $z = 0$ (the xy-plane), and the planes $x = a$, $y = b$, and $z = c$.

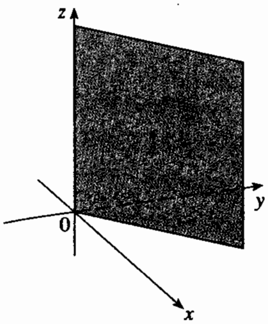


FIGURE 8
The plane $y = x$

EXAMPLE 2 Describe and sketch the surface in $\mathbb{R}^3$ represented by the equation $y = x$.

SOLUTION The equation represents the set of all points in $\mathbb{R}^3$ whose x- and y-coordinates are equal, that is, $\{(x, x, z) \mid x \in \mathbb{R}, z \in \mathbb{R}\}$. This is a vertical plane that intersects the xy-plane in the line $y = x$, $z = 0$. The portion of this plane that lies in the first octant is sketched in Figure 8.

The familiar formula for the distance between two points in a plane is easily extended to the following three-dimensional formula.

> **Distance Formula in Three Dimensions** The distance $|P_1P_2|$ between the points $P_1(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ and $P_2(x_2, y_2, z_2)$ is
>
> $$|P_1P_2| = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2 + (z_2 - z_1)^2}$$

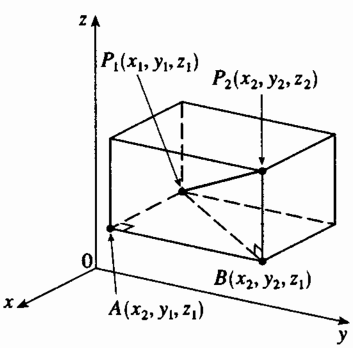


FIGURE 9

To see why this formula is true, we construct a rectangular box as in Figure 9, where P_1 and P_2 are opposite vertices and the faces of the box are parallel to the coordinate planes. If $A(x_2, y_1, z_1)$ and $B(x_2, y_2, z_1)$ are the vertices of the box indicated in the figure, then

$$|P_1A| = |x_2 - x_1| \qquad |AB| = |y_2 - y_1| \qquad |BP_2| = |z_2 - z_1|$$

Because triangles P_1BP_2 and P_1AB are both right-angled, two applications of the Pythagorean Theorem give

$$|P_1P_2|^2 = |P_1B|^2 + |BP_2|^2$$

and

$$|P_1B|^2 = |P_1A|^2 + |AB|^2$$

Combining these equations, we get

$$\begin{aligned} |P_1P_2|^2 &= |P_1A|^2 + |AB|^2 + |BP_2|^2 \\ &= |x_2 - x_1|^2 + |y_2 - y_1|^2 + |z_2 - z_1|^2 \\ &= (x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2 + (z_2 - z_1)^2 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore

$$|P_1P_2| = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2 + (z_2 - z_1)^2}$$

EXAMPLE 3 The distance from the point $P(2, -1, 7)$ to the point $Q(1, -3, 5)$ is

$$|PQ| = \sqrt{(1-2)^2 + (-3+1)^2 + (5-7)^2}$$
$$= \sqrt{1+4+4} = 3$$

EXAMPLE 4 Find an equation of a sphere with radius r and center $C(h, k, l)$.

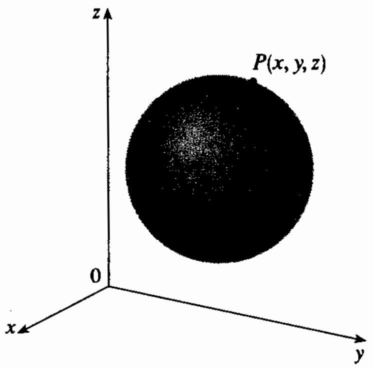


FIGURE 10

SOLUTION By definition, a sphere is the set of all points $P(x, y, z)$ whose distance from C is r. (See Figure 10.) Thus, P is on the sphere if and only if $|PC| = r$. Squaring both sides, we have $|PC|^2 = r^2$ or

$$(x-h)^2 + (y-k)^2 + (z-l)^2 = r^2$$

The result of Example 4 is worth remembering.

> **Equation of a Sphere** An equation of a sphere with center $C(h, k, l)$ and radius r is
>
> $$(x-h)^2 + (y-k)^2 + (z-l)^2 = r^2$$
>
> In particular, if the center is the origin O, then an equation of the sphere is
>
> $$x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = r^2$$

EXAMPLE 5 Show that $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 + 4x - 6y + 2z + 6 = 0$ is the equation of a sphere, and find its center and radius.

SOLUTION We can rewrite the given equation in the form of an equation of a sphere if we complete squares:

$$(x^2 + 4x + 4) + (y^2 - 6y + 9) + (z^2 + 2z + 1) = -6 + 4 + 9 + 1$$
$$(x+2)^2 + (y-3)^2 + (z+1)^2 = 8$$

Comparing this equation with the standard form, we see that it is the equation of a sphere with center $(-2, 3, -1)$ and radius $\sqrt{8} = 2\sqrt{2}$.

EXAMPLE 6 What region in $\mathbb{R}^3$ is represented by the following inequalities?

$$1 \leqslant x^2 + y^2 + z^2 \leqslant 4 \qquad z \leqslant 0$$

SOLUTION The inequalities

$$1 \leqslant x^2 + y^2 + z^2 \leqslant 4$$

can be rewritten as

$$1 \leqslant \sqrt{x^2 + y^2 + z^2} \leqslant 2$$

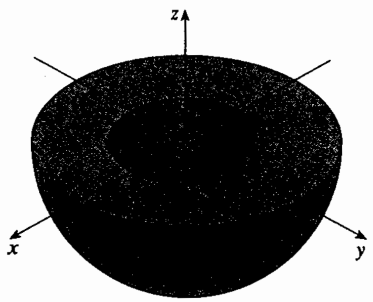


FIGURE 11

so they represent the points (x, y, z) whose distance from the origin is at least 1 and at most 2. But we are also given that $z \leqslant 0$, so the points lie on or below the xy-plane. Thus, the given inequalities represent the region that lies between (or on) the spheres $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = 1$ and $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = 4$ and beneath (or on) the xy-plane. It is sketched in Figure 11.

12.1 Exercises

1. Suppose you start at the origin, move along the x-axis a distance of 4 units in the positive direction, and then move downward a distance of 3 units. What are the coordinates of your position?

2. Sketch the points $(0, 5, 2)$, $(4, 0, -1)$, $(2, 4, 6)$, and $(1, -1, 2)$ on a single set of coordinate axes.

3. Which of the points $P(6, 2, 3)$, $Q(-5, -1, 4)$, and $R(0, 3, 8)$ is closest to the xz-plane? Which point lies in the yz-plane?

4. What are the projections of the point $(2, 3, 5)$ on the xy-, yz-, and xz-planes? Draw a rectangular box with the origin and $(2, 3, 5)$ as opposite vertices and with its faces parallel to the coordinate planes. Label all vertices of the box. Find the length of the diagonal of the box.

5. Describe and sketch the surface in $\mathbb{R}^3$ represented by the equation $x + y = 2$.

6. (a) What does the equation $x = 4$ represent in $\mathbb{R}^2$? What does it represent in $\mathbb{R}^3$? Illustrate with sketches.
   (b) What does the equation $y = 3$ represent in $\mathbb{R}^3$? What does $z = 5$ represent? What does the pair of equations $y = 3$, $z = 5$ represent? In other words, describe the set of points (x, y, z) such that $y = 3$ and $z = 5$. Illustrate with a sketch.

7. Show that the triangle with vertices $P(-2, 4, 0)$, $Q(1, 2, -1)$, and $R(-1, 1, 2)$ is an equilateral triangle.

8. Find the lengths of the sides of the triangle with vertices $A(1, 2, -3)$, $B(3, 4, -2)$, and $C(3, -2, 1)$. Is ABC a right triangle? Is it an isosceles triangle?

9. Determine whether the points lie on a straight line.
   (a) $A(5, 1, 3)$, $B(7, 9, -1)$, $C(1, -15, 11)$
   (b) $K(0, 3, -4)$, $L(1, 2, -2)$, $M(3, 0, 1)$

10. Find the distance from $(3, 7, -5)$ to each of the following.
   (a) The xy-plane (b) The yz-plane
   (c) The xz-plane (d) The x-axis
   (e) The y-axis (f) The z-axis

11. Find an equation of the sphere with center $(1, -4, 3)$ and radius 5. What is the intersection of this sphere with the xz-plane?

12. Find an equation of the sphere with center $(6, 5, -2)$ and radius $\sqrt{7}$. Describe its intersection with each of the coordinate planes.

13. Find an equation of the sphere that passes through the point $(4, 3, -1)$ and has center $(3, 8, 1)$.

14. Find an equation of the sphere that passes through the origin and whose center is $(1, 2, 3)$.

15–18 Show that the equation represents a sphere, and find its center and radius.

15. $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 - 6x + 4y - 2z = 11$

16. $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = 4x - 2y$

17. $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = x + y + z$

18. $4x^2 + 4y^2 + 4z^2 - 8x + 16y = 1$

19. (a) Prove that the midpoint of the line segment from $P_1(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ to $P_2(x_2, y_2, z_2)$ is

$$\left(\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}, \frac{y_1 + y_2}{2}, \frac{z_1 + z_2}{2}\right)$$

   (b) Find the lengths of the medians of the triangle with vertices $A(1, 2, 3)$, $B(-2, 0, 5)$, and $C(4, 1, 5)$.

20. Find an equation of a sphere if one of its diameters has endpoints $(2, 1, 4)$ and $(4, 3, 10)$.

21. Find equations of the spheres with center $(2, -3, 6)$ that touch (a) the xy-plane, (b) the yz-plane, (c) the xz-plane.

22. Find an equation of the largest sphere with center $(5, 4, 9)$ that is contained in the first octant.

23–34 Describe in words the region of $\mathbb{R}^3$ represented by the equation or inequality.

23. $y = -4$

24. $x = 10$

25. $x > 3$

26. $y \geq 0$

27. $0 \leq z \leq 6$

28. $y = z$

29. $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 > 1$

30. $1 \leq x^2 + y^2 + z^2 \leq 25$

31. $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 - 2z < 3$

32. $x^2 + y^2 = 1$

33. $x^2 + z^2 \leq 9$

34. $xyz = 0$

35–38 Write inequalities to describe the region.

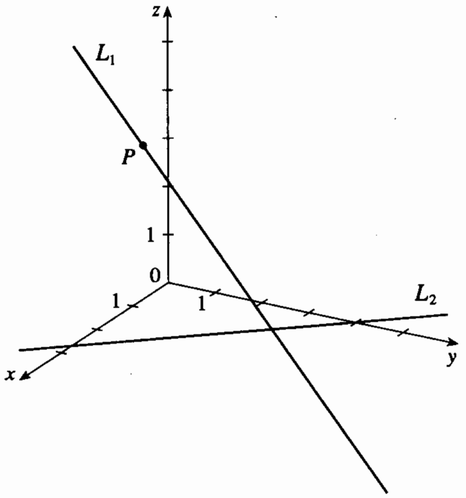
35. The half-space consisting of all points to the left of the xz-plane

36. The solid rectangular box in the first octant bounded by the planes $x = 1$, $y = 2$, and $z = 3$

37. The region consisting of all points between (but not on) the spheres of radius r and R centered at the origin, where $r < R$

38. The solid upper hemisphere of the sphere of radius 2 centered at the origin

39. The figure shows a line L_1 in space and a second line L_2, which is the projection of L_1 on the xy-plane. (In other words, the points on L_2 are directly beneath, or above, the points on L_1.)



(a) Find the coordinates of the point P on the line L_1.

(b) Locate on the diagram the points A, B, and C, where the line L_1 intersects the xy-plane, the yz-plane, and the xz-plane, respectively.

40. Consider the points P such that the distance from P to $A(-1, 5, 3)$ is twice the distance from P to $B(6, 2, -2)$. Show that the set of all such points is a sphere, and find its center and radius.

41. Find an equation of the set of all points equidistant from the points $A(-1, 5, 3)$ and $B(6, 2, -2)$. Describe the set.

42. Find the volume of the solid that lies inside both of the spheres

$$x^2 + y^2 + z^2 + 4x - 2y + 4z + 5 = 0$$

and

$$x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = 4$$

12.2 Vectors

The term **vector** is used by scientists to indicate a quantity (such as displacement or velocity or force) that has both magnitude and direction. A vector is often represented by an arrow or a directed line segment. The length of the arrow represents the magnitude of the vector and the arrow points in the direction of the vector. We denote a vector by printing a letter in boldface (**v**) or by putting an arrow above the letter ($\vec{v}$).

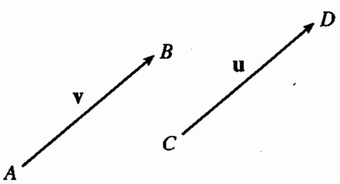


FIGURE 1
Equivalent vectors

For instance, suppose a particle moves along a line segment from point A to point B. The corresponding **displacement vector v**, shown in Figure 1, has **initial point** A (the tail) and **terminal point** B (the tip) and we indicate this by writing $\mathbf{v} = \overrightarrow{AB}$. Notice that the vector $\mathbf{u} = \overrightarrow{CD}$ has the same length and the same direction as **v** even though it is in a different position. We say that **u** and **v** are **equivalent** (or **equal**) and we write $\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{v}$. The **zero vector**, denoted by **0**, has length 0. It is the only vector with no specific direction.

Combining Vectors

Suppose a particle moves from A to B, so its displacement vector is $\overrightarrow{AB}$. Then the particle changes direction and moves from B to C, with displacement vector $\overrightarrow{BC}$ as in Figure 2. The combined effect of these displacements is that the particle has moved from A to C. The resulting displacement vector $\overrightarrow{AC}$ is called the *sum* of $\overrightarrow{AB}$ and $\overrightarrow{BC}$ and we write

$$\overrightarrow{AC} = \overrightarrow{AB} + \overrightarrow{BC}$$

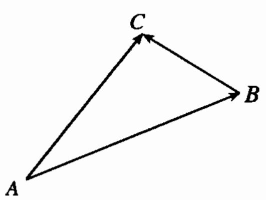


FIGURE 2

In general, if we start with vectors **u** and **v**, we first move **v** so that its tail coincides with the tip of **u** and define the sum of **u** and **v** as follows.

> **Definition of Vector Addition** If **u** and **v** are vectors positioned so the initial point of **v** is at the terminal point of **u**, then the **sum u + v** is the vector from the initial point of **u** to the terminal point of **v**.