2. Modules (continued)

More on modules

Sums of modules

Suppose that R is a ring and M is an R-module. Let $N_1, \ldots, N_k$ be submodules of M. Then the sum $N_1 + \ldots + N_k$ is the collection

$$N_1 + \ldots + N_k = \{n_1 + \cdots + n_k : n_i \in N_i\}$$

It is a submodule of M and the smallest submodule containing all the N_i.

One can also consider infinite collections of submodules:

$$\sum_{i \in I} N_i = \{\sum_{j \in J} n_j : n_j \in N_j,\ J \subset I \text{ finite } \}$$

Generating submodules (compare vector spaces)

Suppose $A \subset M$. Then the submodule RA of M *generated by* A is the smallest submodule of M containing A. In practice it is the collection

$$RA = \{r_1 a_1 + \cdots + r_k a_k : r_1, \ldots, r_k \in R, a_1, \ldots, a_k \in A, k \in \mathbb{Z}, k \geq 0\}$$

In linear algebra, we would say that RA is the *submodule of M that is spanned by A* and this terminology can be used here as well.

We can also say that RA is the set of (finite) R-linear combinations of elements of A.

Generating sets - an example

Suppose that V is a $\mathbb{Q}$-vector space of dimension n and $w_1, \ldots, w_k$ are a set of vectors in V.

Since V is also a $\mathbb{Z}$ module (by "restriction of scalars") we can consider the sub-$\mathbb{Z}$-module of V generated by the w_i. This is all $\mathbb{Z}$-linear combinations of the w_i.

For example if $V = \mathbb{Q}^2$ and $A = \{w_1, w_2\}$ are the standard basis elements then $\mathbb{Z}A$ is the subset of V of vectors with integer coefficients in the standard basis.

Finite generation

Definition: An R-module M is finitely generated if there is a finite subset $A \subset M$ such that $RA = M$.

Note that $\mathbb{Q}$ is finitely generated as a $\mathbb{Q}$-module (in fact it's generated by one element) but not as a $\mathbb{Z}$-module.

For vector spaces, finitely generated means finite dimensional. A generating set is the same as a spanning set.

Comparison with vector spaces

A set $m_1, \ldots, m_k$ in an R-module M is *linearly independent* if, whenever $\sum r_i m_i = 0$, all $r_i = 0$.

For vector spaces, a maximal linearly independent set (meaning a linearly independent set which becomes dependent when any nonzero element is added to it) automatically spans the vector space, and we call this a basis.

For modules, this fails. Consider $\mathbb{Z}^2$ and let $e_1 = [2, 0]$ and $e_2 = [0, 2]$. If $e = [a, b]$ then

$$2e - ae_1 - be_2 = 0$$

so e_1, e_2 is a maximal linearly independent set. But they don't generate all of $\mathbb{Z}^2$.

Cyclic modules

Definition: An R module M is cyclic if it is generated by one element: $M = Ra$ for some $a \in M$.

- Cyclic groups are cyclic $\mathbb{Z}$-modules.
- If R is a ring with unity and I is a left ideal, then R/I is a cyclic R-module generated by $1 + I$.
- If R is a ring with unity, an ideal I is a cyclic module if and only if it is a principal ideal.
- If $R = M_n(F)$ for a field F and $M = F^n$ is the space of column vectors viewed as an R-module, then M is cyclic.

If $R = \mathbb{Z}[i]$, then $(1 + i)R$ is a cyclic module for R generated by $(1 + i)$. *But* if we view $(1 + i)R$ as a $\mathbb{Z}$-module inside the $\mathbb{Z}$-module $R = \mathbb{Z} + \mathbb{Z}i$ then $(1 + i)R$ is generated *over* $\mathbb{Z}$ by $1 + i$ and $(1 + i)i = i - 1$; it is not cyclic as a $\mathbb{Z}$-module.

Characterization of cyclic modules

Proposition: Let M be a cyclic R-module. Then M is isomorphic to R/I where I is a left ideal of R.

Proof: Let $m \in M$ generate M. Consider the map $f : R \to M$ defined by $f(r) = rm$. This is a module homomorphism since

$$f(r_1 r_2) = r_1 r_2 m = r_1(r_2 m) = r_1 f(r_2 c).$$

(Remember that we are thinking of R here as an R-module, not a ring.)

Characterization of cyclic modules cont'd

The kernel of the map $f(r) = rm$ is the set $I = \{r \in R : rm = 0\}$.

This is a left ideal since if $rm = 0$ then $srm = 0$ for all $s \in R$.

Since M is cyclic, the map f is surjective.

Therefore by the isomorphism theorem M is isomorphic to R/I.

More on cyclic modules

Recall that a module M for $F[x]$ is the same as an F-vector space V together with a linear map $T : V \to V$.

If M is cyclic then there is an $m \in M$ so that every $m' \in M$ is given by $p(x)m$ for some $p(x) \in F[x]$.

This means that that there is a vector $v \in V$ so that every vector $v' \in V$ is of the form $p(T)v$. In other words, the set $v, Tv, T^2v, \ldots, T^nv, \ldots$ spans V.

If $V = F^2$ and T satisfies $Te_1 = 0$ and $Te_2 = e_2$ then V is *not* cyclic.

If $Te_1 = 0$ and $Te_2 = e_1$ then V is cyclic and generated by e_2. Also $T^2e_2 = 0$ and so as an R-module V is isomorphic to $F[x]/(x^2)$.

Direct Sums and Direct Products

Direct Products (definition)

Suppose that $M_1, \ldots, M_k$ are R modules. The direct product $M_1 \times \cdots \times M_k$ of the M_i is the set of "vectors" $(m_1, \ldots, m_k)$ with $m_i \in M_i$. Addition and multiplication by R are done componentwise.

Internal direct sums

Suppose that M is an R-module and $N_1, \ldots, N_k$ are submodules of M. There is a module homomorphism

$$N_1 \times \cdots \times N_k \to N_1 + \cdots N_k \subset M$$

defined by sending $(n_1, \ldots, n_k) \to n_1 + \cdots n_k$.

Internal direct sums (continued)

Definition: The sum map above is an isomorphism if and only if either of the following two conditions are satisfied:

- $N_j \cap (N_1 + \cdots N_{j-1} + N_{j+1} + \cdots N_k) = 0$ for all $j = 1, 2, \ldots, k$
- Any $x \in N_1 + N_2 + \ldots + N_k$ can be written *uniquely* as a sum $x = n_1 + n_2 + \ldots + n_k$ with $n_i \in N_i$.

If M is isomorphic to $N_1 \times \cdots \times N_k$ via the sum map, we say that

$$M = N_1 \oplus N_2 \oplus \cdots \oplus N_k$$

and say that M is the *internal direct sum* of the N_i.

Direct Sums vs Direct Products

Definitions

Suppose that I is a set and M_i is an R-module for each $i \in I$.

The *direct product* $\prod_I M_i$ is the collection of all functions $f : I \to \cup_{i \in I} M_i$ such that $f(i) \in M_i$. It is an R-module: $(f+g)(i) = f(i) + g(i)$ and $(rf)(i) = r(f(i))$.

The *direct sum* $\oplus_I M_i$ is the submodule of $\prod_I M_i$ consistsing of functions f with the additional property that there is a finite subset $J \subset I$ such that $f(i) = 0$ unless $i \in J$.

Notice that if I is finite then these two things are the same.

Countable sums and products

Suppose that $I = \mathbb{N}$, the natural numbers, and M_i is a family of R-modules indexed by I. Then:

- $\prod_{i \in I} M_i$ consists of sequences $(m_1, m_2, \ldots, m_k, \ldots)$ where $m_i \in M_i$.
- $\oplus_{i \in I} M_i$ consists of sequences $(m_1, m_2, \ldots, m_k, \ldots)$ where $m_i \in M_i$ and there is an N such that $m_i = 0$ for all $i \geq N$.

Notice that, if each M_i is countable, then so is $\oplus_{i \in I} M_i$, but $\prod_{i \in I} M_i$ is not.

Free Modules

Definition

Definition: A module M is *free* on a set A of generators if, for every nonzero element m of M, there are *unique* nonzero $r_1, \ldots, r_k$ in R and elements $a_1, \ldots, a_k$ in A such that

$$m = r_1 a_1 + \cdots + r_k a_k.$$

Such a set A is called a *basis* of M, so a module M is free if it has a basis.

Examples and non-examples

If $A = \{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ is finite, then M is free on A if the map

$$\oplus_{i=1}^{n} R \to M$$

defined by $(r_1, \ldots, r_n) \mapsto r_1 a_1 + \cdots + r_n a_n$ is an isomorphism. So basically M is free on a set A with n elements if and only if it is isomorphic to R^n.

If $R = \mathbb{Z}$, then $M = \mathbb{Z}/m\mathbb{Z} \oplus \mathbb{Z}/m\mathbb{Z}$ is not free on $(1, 0)$ and $(0, 1)$. Every $m \in M$ is a linear combination $r_1(1, 0) + r_2(0, 1)$ for $r_1, r_2 \in \mathbb{Z}$, but r_1 and r_2 are not uniquely determined. In fact M is not free on any set of generators.

Any vector space over F is a free F-module.

Rings with nonprincipal ideals.

A principal ideal in a (commutative) ring is a free module, but a non-principal ideal is not. Consider $I = (2, 1 + \sqrt{-5}) \subset R = \mathbb{Z}[\sqrt{-5}]$. Choose any two elements of this ideal, say x and y. Then $-y \cdot x + x \cdot y = 0$ which shows that the map $R \oplus R \to I$ is not injective. On the other hand we know that the ideal is not principal.

Mapping property

Let A be a set. There exists a module $F(A)$, called the *free module on* A, which contains A as a subset.
It satisfies the following property.

Let M be any module and let $f : A \to M$ be any *map of sets*. Then there is a unique module homomorphism $\Phi : F(A) \to M$ such that the following diagram commutes:

$$\begin{tikzcd} A \arrow[r, hook, "\subset"] \arrow[dr, "f"'] & F(A) \arrow[d, "\Phi"] \\ & M \end{tikzcd}$$

Examples of mapping property

- If V is a vector space and B is a basis, then V is free on B. A linear map from $V \to W$ is determined by where you send B. In this situation, $f : B \to W$ is the map of sets sending the basis of V to a subset of W, and Φ is the resulting linear map.
- If A is any set, then $F(A)$ is the R-module of "formal linear combinations of elements of A": the set of sums $\sum r_i a_i$ over finite collections $\{a_1, \ldots, a_n\}$ of elements of A.
- Alternatively it is the set of functions $f : A \to R$ that are zero for all but a finite subset of A with pointwise addition and scalar multiplication.

Uniqueness

Any two free modules on the same set are isomorphic via the module map induced by the identity map on A.

Rank

Torsion Definition

Suppose that R is a ring with unity.

Definition: Let M be an R-module. An element $m \in M$ is a torsion element if $rm = 0$ for some nonzero $r \in R$. The set of torsion elements in M is called $\mathrm{Tor}(M)$.

- Any finite abelian group is a torsion $\mathbb{Z}$-module.
- Any cyclic R-module is torsion.
- Any finite dimensional vector space V over a field F with a linear map $T : V \to V$ is a torsion $F[x]$-module.

Lemma: If R is an integral domain and M is an R-module, then the set of torsion elements is a submodule.

Proof: If m_1 and m_2 are torsion, $r_1 m_1 = 0$ and $r_2 m_2 = 0$, with both r_1 and r_2 nonzero, then $r_1 r_2(m_1 + m2) = 0$ and $r_1 r_2(m_1 m_2) = 0$, and $r_1 r_2$ is nonzero since R is an integral domain.

Torsion-free modules

If R is an integral domain, an R-module M is called torsion-free if $\mathrm{Tor}(M) = 0$.

Any free module is torsion-free, but the converse is false. For example, non-principal ideals in integral domains are not free. This follows from the following lemma.

Lemma: An ideal of R is free if and only if it is principal.

Proof: R is a free module of rank 1, so a submodule has rank at most 1; if it has rank 1, it is a principal ideal.