

Chapter 2

1

VECTORS

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29-Sep-25

1

Lecture 04

2

Vectors Multiplication

- The Vector (Cross) Product

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The Vector Product

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- There are instances where the product of two vectors is another vector.
- Earlier we saw where the product of two vectors was a scalar.
- The vector product of two vectors is called the cross product.

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The Vector Product Defined

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The vector (cross) product of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ is defined as a third vector:

$$\vec{C} = \vec{A} \times \vec{B}$$

The magnitude of $\vec{C}$:

$$|\vec{C}| = |\vec{A}||\vec{B}|\sin\theta$$

θ is the angle between $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ when they are drawn starting at the same point.

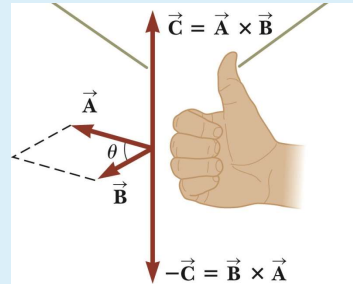
4

More About the Vector Product

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The direction of $\vec{C}$ is perpendicular to the plane formed by $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$.

The best way to determine this direction is to use the right-hand rule (R.H.R).



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Properties of the Vector Product

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The vector product is not commutative. The order in which the vectors are multiplied is important.

To account for order, remember:

$$\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = -\vec{B} \times \vec{A}$$

If $\vec{A}$ is parallel to $\vec{B}$ ($\theta = 0^\circ$ or 180°), then

$$\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = 0$$

Therefore

$$\vec{A} \times \vec{A} = 0$$

If $\vec{A}$ is perpendicular to $\vec{B}$, then

$$\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = |\vec{A}||\vec{B}|$$

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Properties of the Vector Product

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The vector product obeys the distributive law:

$$\vec{A} \times (\vec{B} + \vec{C}) = (\vec{A} \times \vec{B}) + (\vec{A} \times \vec{C})$$

The derivative of the cross product with respect to some variable such as t is:

$$\frac{d}{dt} (\vec{A} \times \vec{B}) = \left(\frac{d\vec{A}}{dt} \times \vec{B} \right) + \left(\vec{A} \times \frac{d\vec{B}}{dt} \right)$$

where it is important to preserve the multiplicative order of the vectors.

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Vector Products of Unit Vectors

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$$\hat{i} \times \hat{i} = (1)(1)\sin 0^\circ = 0$$

$$\hat{i} \times \hat{i} = \hat{j} \times \hat{j} = \hat{k} \times \hat{k} = 0$$

$$\hat{i} \times \hat{j} = \hat{k}$$

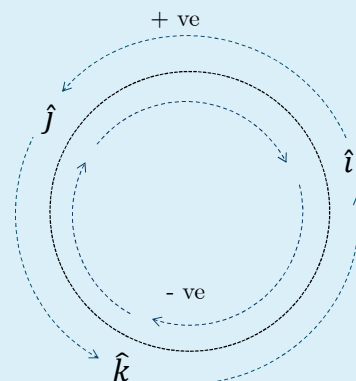
$$\hat{j} \times \hat{k} = \hat{i}$$

$$\hat{k} \times \hat{i} = \hat{j}$$

$$\hat{j} \times \hat{i} = -\hat{k}$$

$$\hat{k} \times \hat{j} = -\hat{i}$$

$$\hat{i} \times \hat{k} = -\hat{j}$$



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Signs in Cross Products

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- Signs are interchangeable in cross products

$$\vec{A} \times (-\vec{B}) = -\vec{A} \times \vec{B}$$

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Using Determinants

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- The cross product can be expressed as

$$\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = \begin{vmatrix} \hat{i} & \hat{j} & \hat{k} \\ A_x & A_y & A_z \\ B_x & B_y & B_z \end{vmatrix}$$

$$\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = +(A_y B_z - A_z B_y)\hat{i} - (A_x B_z - A_z B_x)\hat{j} + (A_x B_y - A_y B_x)\hat{k}$$

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The Vector product-1

Friday, 29 January, 2021 21:33

Lecturer: Mustafa Al-Zyout, Philadelphia University, Jordan.



R. A. Serway and J. W. Jewett, Jr., *Physics for Scientists and Engineers*, 9th Ed., CENGAGE Learning, 2014.



J. Walker, D. Halliday and R. Resnick, *Fundamentals of Physics*, 10th ed., WILEY, 2014.



H. D. Young and R. A. Freedman, *University Physics with Modern Physics*, 14th ed., PEARSON, 2016.



H. A. Radi and J. O. Rasmussen, *Principles of Physics For Scientists and Engineers*, 1st ed., SPRINGER, 2013.

Vectors $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ have magnitudes of 3 units and 4 units, respectively.

- What is the angle between the directions of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ if $\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = 0$
- What is the angle between the directions of $\vec{A}$ and $\vec{B}$ if $\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = 12$

Solution:

$$|\vec{A} \times \vec{B}| = AB \sin \theta$$

$$0 = (3)(4)(\sin \theta)$$

$$\Rightarrow \theta = \sin^{-1} 0 = 0^\circ, 180^\circ$$

The vectors are in the same direction (parallel); $\theta = 0^\circ$

OR: The vectors are in opposite directions (antiparallel); $\theta = 180^\circ$

Solution

$$|\vec{A} \times \vec{B}| = AB \sin \theta$$

$$12 = (3)(4)(\sin \theta)$$

$$\Rightarrow \theta = \sin^{-1} 1 = 90^\circ$$

The vectors are perpendicular; $\theta = 90^\circ$

The Vector product-2

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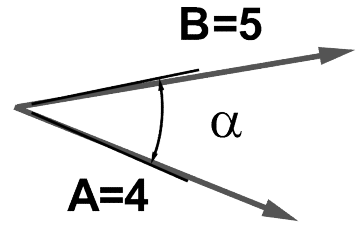


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The figure shows two vectors lying in the xy plane, if $|\vec{A}| = 6$, $|\vec{B}| = 5$ and $\alpha = 40^\circ$. Determine the vector product $\vec{A} \times \vec{B}$ of them.



Answer:

$$\vec{A} \times \vec{B} = 19.3\hat{k}$$

Cross product, unit-vector notation-1

Saturday, 30 January, 2021 12:20

If $\vec{a} = 3\hat{i} - 4\hat{j}$ and $\vec{b} = -2\hat{i} + 3\hat{k}$, what is $\vec{c} = \vec{a} \times \vec{b}$?

SOLUTION

When two vectors are in unit-vector notation, we can find their cross product by using the distributive law.

$$\begin{aligned}\vec{c} &= (3\hat{i} - 4\hat{j}) \times (-2\hat{i} + 3\hat{k}) = \begin{vmatrix} \hat{i} & \hat{j} & \hat{k} \\ 3 & -4 & 0 \\ -2 & 0 & 3 \end{vmatrix} \\ &= +[(-4 \times 3) - (0 \times 0)]\hat{i} - [(3 \times 3) - (0 \times -2)]\hat{j} + [(3 \times 0) - (-4 \times -2)]\hat{k} \\ \vec{c} &= -12\hat{i} - 9\hat{j} - 8\hat{k}\end{aligned}$$

This vector is perpendicular to both $\vec{a}$ and $\vec{b}$, a fact you can check by showing that $\vec{a} \cdot \vec{c} = 0$ and $\vec{b} \cdot \vec{c} = 0$; that is, there is no component of $\vec{c}$ along the direction of either $\vec{a}$ or $\vec{b}$.

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