Supplemental problems: §2.2, §2.3

Solutions

1. Put an augmented matrix into reduced row echelon form to solve the system

$$\begin{aligned} x_1 - 2x_2 - 9x_3 + \quad x_4 &= 3 \\ 4x_2 + 8x_3 - 24x_4 &= 4 \end{aligned}$$

Solution.

$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & -9 & 1 & 3 \\ 0 & 4 & 8 & -24 & 4 \end{array}\right) \xrightarrow{R_2=\frac{R_2}{4}} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & -9 & 1 & 3 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & -6 & 1 \end{array}\right)$$

$$\xrightarrow{R_1=R_1+2R_2} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & 0 & -5 & -11 & 5 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & -6 & 1 \end{array}\right)$$

The third and fourth columns are not pivot columns, so x_3 and x_4 are free variables. Our equations are

$$\begin{aligned} x_1 - 5x_3 - 11x_4 &= 5 \\ x_2 + 2x_3 - \quad 6x_4 &= 1 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned} x_1 &= 5 + 5x_3 + 11x_4 \\ x_2 &= 1 - 2x_3 + 6x_4 \\ x_3 &= x_3 \quad \text{(any real number)} \\ x_4 &= x_4 \quad \text{(any real number)} \end{aligned}$$

2. We can use linear algebra to find a polynomial that fits given data, in the same way that we found a circle through three specified points in the §2.1 WeBWorK.

Is there a degree-three polynomial $P(x)$ whose graph passes through the points $(-2,6)$, $(-1,4)$, $(1,6)$, and $(2,22)$? If so, how many degree-three polynomials have a graph through those four points? We answer this question in steps below.

a) If $P(x) = a_0 + a_1x + a_2x^2 + a_3x^3$ is a degree-three polynomial passing through the four points listed above, then $P(-2) = 6$, $P(-1) = 4$, $P(1) = 6$, and $P(2) = 22$. Write a system of four equations which we would solve to find a_0, a_1, a_2, and a_3.

b) Write the augmented matrix to represent this system and put it into reduced row-echelon form. Is the system consistent? How many solutions does it have?

Solution.

a) We compute

$$\begin{aligned} P(-2)=6 &\implies & a_0+a_1\cdot(-2)+a_2\cdot(-2)^2+a_3\cdot(-2)^3=6,\\ P(-1)=4 &\implies & a_0+a_1\cdot(-1)+a_2\cdot(-1)^2+a_3\cdot(-1)^3=4,\\ P(1)=6 &\implies & a_0+a_1\cdot 1+a_2\cdot 1^2+a_3\cdot 1^3=6,\\ P(2)=22 &\implies & a_0+a_1\cdot 2+a_2\cdot 2^2+a_3\cdot 2^3=22. \end{aligned}$$

Simplifying gives us

$$\begin{aligned} a_0 - 2a_1 + 4a_2 - 8a_3 &= 6\\ a_0 - a_1 + a_2 - a_3 &= 4\\ a_0 + a_1 + a_2 + a_3 &= 6\\ a_0 + 2a_1 + 4a_2 + 8a_3 &= 22. \end{aligned}$$

b) The corresponding augmented matrix is

$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} 1 & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6\\ 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 4\\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 6\\ 1 & 2 & 4 & 8 & 22 \end{array}\right)$$

We label pivots with boxes as we proceed along. First, we subtract row 1 from each of rows 2, 3, and 4.

$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6\\ 1 & -1 & 1 & -1 & 4\\ 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 & 6\\ 1 & 2 & 4 & 8 & 22 \end{array}\right) \rightsquigarrow \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6\\ 0 & \boxed{1} & -3 & 7 & -2\\ 0 & 3 & -3 & 9 & 0\\ 0 & 4 & 0 & 16 & 16 \end{array}\right)$$

We now create zeros below the second pivot by subtracting multiples of the second row, then divide by 6 to get

$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6\\ 0 & \boxed{1} & -3 & 7 & -2\\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{6} & -12 & 6\\ 0 & 0 & 12 & -12 & 24 \end{array}\right) \xrightarrow{R_3 = R_3 \div 6} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6\\ 0 & \boxed{1} & -3 & 7 & -2\\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & -2 & 1\\ 0 & 0 & 12 & -12 & 24 \end{array}\right).$$

Now we subtract a 12 times row 3 from row 4 and divide by 12:

$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6\\ 0 & \boxed{1} & -3 & 7 & -2\\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & -2 & 1\\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{12} & 12 \end{array}\right) \xrightarrow{R_4 = R_4 \div 12} \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6\\ 0 & \boxed{1} & -3 & 7 & -2\\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & -2 & 1\\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 1 \end{array}\right).$$

At this point we can actually use back-substitution to solve: the last row says $a_3 = 1$, then plugging in $a_3 = 1$ in the third row gives us $a_2 = 3$, etc. However, for the sake of practice with reduced echelon form, let's keep row-reducing.

From right to left, we create zeros above the pivots in pivot columns by subtracting multiples of the pivot columns.

$$\left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & -8 & 6 \\ 0 & \boxed{1} & -3 & 7 & -2 \\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & -2 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 1 \end{array}\right) \rightsquigarrow \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 4 & 0 & 14 \\ 0 & \boxed{1} & -3 & 0 & -9 \\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 0 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 1 \end{array}\right)$$

$$\rightsquigarrow \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & -2 & 0 & 0 & 2 \\ 0 & \boxed{1} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 0 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 1 \end{array}\right)$$

$$\rightsquigarrow \left(\begin{array}{cccc|c} \boxed{1} & 0 & 0 & 0 & 2 \\ 0 & \boxed{1} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 0 & 3 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \boxed{1} & 1 \end{array}\right)$$

So $a_0 = 2$, $a_1 = 0$, $a_2 = 3$, and $a_3 = 1$. In other words,

$$\boxed{P(x) = 2 + 3x^2 + x^3}.$$

Therefore, there is exactly one third-degree polynomial satisfying the conditions of the problem. (You should check that, in fact, we have $P(-2) = 6$, $P(-1) = 4$, etc.)