Gaussian Elimination

Major: All Engineering Majors

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Transforming Numerical Methods Education for STEM Undergraduates

Naïve Gaussian Elimination

A method to solve simultaneous linear equations of the form [A][X]=[C]

Two steps

1. Forward Elimination
2. Back Substitution

Forward Elimination

The goal of forward elimination is to transform the coefficient matrix into an upper triangular matrix

$$\begin{bmatrix} 25 & 5 & 1 \\ 64 & 8 & 1 \\ 144 & 12 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 106.8 \\ 177.2 \\ 279.2 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\downarrow$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 25 & 5 & 1 \\ 0 & -4.8 & -1.56 \\ 0 & 0 & 0.7 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 106.8 \\ -96.21 \\ 0.735 \end{bmatrix}$$

Forward Elimination

A set of *n* equations and *n* unknowns

$$a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 + a_{13}x_3 + \ldots + a_{1n}x_n = b_1$$

$$a_{21}x_1 + a_{22}x_2 + a_{23}x_3 + \ldots + a_{2n}x_n = b_2$$

$$\vdots \qquad \vdots$$

$$a_{n1}x_1 + a_{n2}x_2 + a_{n3}x_3 + \ldots + a_{nn}x_n = b_n$$

(n-1) steps of forward elimination

Forward Elimination

Step 1

For Equation 2, divide Equation 1 by a_{11} and multiply by a_{21}.

$$\left[\frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}\right](a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 + a_{13}x_3 + \ldots + a_{1n}x_n = b_1)$$

$$a_{21}x_1 + \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}a_{12}x_2 + \ldots + \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}a_{1n}x_n = \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}b_1$$

Forward Elimination

Subtract the result from Equation 2.

$$a_{21}x_1 + a_{22}x_2 + a_{23}x_3 + \ldots + a_{2n}x_n = b_2$$

$$- \quad a_{21}x_1 + \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}a_{12}x_2 + \ldots + \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}a_{1n}x_n = \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}b_1$$

$$\left(a_{22} - \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}a_{12}\right)x_2 + \ldots + \left(a_{2n} - \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}a_{1n}\right)x_n = b_2 - \frac{a_{21}}{a_{11}}b_1$$

or $\quad a'_{22}x_2 + \ldots + a'_{2n}x_n = b'_2$

Forward Elimination

Repeat this procedure for the remaining equations to reduce the set of equations as

$$a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 + a_{13}x_3 + \ldots + a_{1n}x_n = b_1$$
$$a'_{22}x_2 + a'_{23}x_3 + \ldots + a'_{2n}x_n = b'_2$$
$$a'_{32}x_2 + a'_{33}x_3 + \ldots + a'_{3n}x_n = b'_3$$
$$\vdots \qquad \vdots \qquad \vdots$$
$$a'_{n2}x_2 + a'_{n3}x_3 + \ldots + a'_{nn}x_n = b'_n$$

End of Step 1

Forward Elimination

Step 2

Repeat the same procedure for the 3rd term of Equation 3.

$$a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 + a_{13}x_3 + \ldots + a_{1n}x_n = b_1$$
$$a'_{22}x_2 + a'_{23}x_3 + \ldots + a'_{2n}x_n = b'_2$$
$$a''_{33}x_3 + \ldots + a''_{3n}x_n = b''_3$$
$$\vdots \qquad \vdots$$
$$a''_{n3}x_3 + \ldots + a''_{nn}x_n = b''_n$$

End of Step 2

Forward Elimination

At the end of (n-1) Forward Elimination steps, the system of equations will look like

$$\begin{aligned} a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 + a_{13}x_3 + \ldots + a_{1n}x_n &= b_1 \\ a'_{22}x_2 + a'_{23}x_3 + \ldots + a'_{2n}x_n &= b'_2 \\ a''_{33}x_3 + \ldots + a''_{3n}x_n &= b''_3 \\ \vdots \qquad\qquad & \\ a_{nn}^{(n-1)}x_n &= b_n^{(n-1)} \end{aligned}$$

End of Step (n-1)

Matrix Form at End of Forward Elimination

$$\begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ 0 & a'_{22} & a'_{23} & \cdots & a'_{2n} \\ 0 & 0 & a''_{33} & \cdots & a''_{3n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \cdots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & a_{nn}^{(n-1)} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \\ \vdots \\ x_n \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} b_1 \\ b'_2 \\ b''_3 \\ \vdots \\ b_n^{(n-1)} \end{bmatrix}$$

Back Substitution

Solve each equation starting from the last equation

$$\begin{bmatrix} 25 & 5 & 1 \\ 0 & -4.8 & -1.56 \\ 0 & 0 & 0.7 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 106.8 \\ -96.21 \\ 0.735 \end{bmatrix}$$

Example of a system of 3 equations

Back Substitution Starting Eqns

$$\begin{aligned} a_{11}x_1 + a_{12}x_2 + a_{13}x_3 + \ldots + a_{1n}x_n &= b_1 \\ a'_{22}x_2 + a'_{23}x_3 + \ldots + a'_{2n}x_n &= b'_2 \\ a''_{33}x_3 + \ldots + a''_n x_n &= b''_3 \\ &\vdots \\ a_{nn}^{(n-1)}x_n &= b_n^{(n-1)} \end{aligned}$$

Back Substitution

Start with the last equation because it has only one unknown

$$x_n = \frac{b_n^{(n-1)}}{a_{nn}^{(n-1)}}$$

Back Substitution

$$x_n = \frac{b_n^{(n-1)}}{a_{nn}^{(n-1)}}$$

$$x_i = \frac{b_i^{(i-1)} - a_{i,i+1}^{(i-1)} x_{i+1} - a_{i,i+2}^{(i-1)} x_{i+2} - \ldots - a_{i,n}^{(i-1)} x_n}{a_{ii}^{(i-1)}} \text{ for } i = n-1,\ldots,1$$

$$x_i = \frac{b_i^{(i-1)} - \sum_{j=i+1}^{n} a_{ij}^{(i-1)} x_j}{a_{ii}^{(i-1)}} \text{ for } i = n-1,\ldots,1$$

THE END

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Naïve Gauss Elimination Pitfalls

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Pitfall#1. Division by zero

$$10x_2 - 7x_3 = 3$$
$$6x_1 + 2x_2 + 3x_3 = 11$$
$$5x_1 - x_2 + 5x_3 = 9$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 10 & -7 \\ 6 & 2 & 3 \\ 5 & -1 & 5 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 3 \\ 11 \\ 9 \end{bmatrix}$$

Is division by zero an issue here?

$$12x_1 + 10x_2 - 7x_3 = 15$$
$$6x_1 + 5x_2 + 3x_3 = 14$$
$$5x_1 - x_2 + 5x_3 = 9$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 12 & 10 & -7 \\ 6 & 5 & 3 \\ 5 & -1 & 5 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 15 \\ 14 \\ 9 \end{bmatrix}$$

Is division by zero an issue here? YES

$$12x_1 + 10x_2 - 7x_3 = 15$$
$$6x_1 + 5x_2 + 3x_3 = 14$$
$$24x_1 - x_2 + 5x_3 = 28$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} 12 & 10 & -7 \\ 6 & 5 & 3 \\ 24 & -1 & 5 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 15 \\ 14 \\ 28 \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} 12 & 10 & -7 \\ 0 & 0 & 6.5 \\ 12 & -21 & 19 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 15 \\ 6.5 \\ -2 \end{bmatrix}$$

Division by zero is a possibility at any step of forward elimination

Pitfall#2. Large Round-off Errors

$$\begin{bmatrix} 20 & 15 & 10 \\ -3 & -2.249 & 7 \\ 5 & 1 & 3 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 45 \\ 1.751 \\ 9 \end{bmatrix}$$

Exact Solution

$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}$$

Pitfall#2. Large Round-off Errors

$$\begin{bmatrix} 20 & 15 & 10 \\ -3 & -2.249 & 7 \\ 5 & 1 & 3 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 45 \\ 1.751 \\ 9 \end{bmatrix}$$

Solve it on a computer using 6 significant digits with chopping

$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.9625 \\ 1.05 \\ 0.999995 \end{bmatrix}$$

Pitfall#2. Large Round-off Errors

$$\begin{bmatrix} 20 & 15 & 10 \\ -3 & -2.249 & 7 \\ 5 & 1 & 3 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 45 \\ 1.751 \\ 9 \end{bmatrix}$$

Solve it on a computer using 5 significant digits with chopping

$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0.625 \\ 1.5 \\ 0.99995 \end{bmatrix}$$

Is there a way to reduce the round off error?

Avoiding Pitfalls

Increase the number of significant digits

- Decreases round-off error
- Does not avoid division by zero

Avoiding Pitfalls

Gaussian Elimination with Partial Pivoting

- Avoids division by zero
- Reduces round off error

THE END

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How Much Time Does Back Substitution Take

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Back Substitution

$$\begin{bmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} & a_{13} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\ 0 & a'_{22} & a'_{23} & \cdots & a'_{2n} \\ 0 & 0 & a''_{33} & \cdots & a''_{3n} \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \cdots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & a_{nn}^{(n-1)} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \\ \vdots \\ x_n \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} b_1 \\ b'_2 \\ b''_3 \\ \vdots \\ b_n^{(n-1)} \end{bmatrix}$$

$$x_n = \frac{b_n^{(n-1)}}{a_{nn}^{(n-1)}}$$

$$x_i = \frac{b_i^{(i-1)} - \sum_{j=i+1}^{n} a_{ij}^{(i-1)} x_j}{a_{ii}^{(i-1)}} \text{ for } i = n-1,\ldots,1$$

```
n = length(B);
X(n)=B(n)/A(n,n)

for i=n-1:-1:1
X(i) = B(i);
   for j=(i+1):1:n
      X(i) = X(i) - A(i, j)*X(j);
   end
X(i) = X(i)/A(i, i);
end
```

Back Substitution

$$CT\,|_{BS} = T\left(4n^2 + 12n\right)$$

THE END

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