



# Fields

Book I

## Fields

Let  $F$  be a set containing distinct elements called 0 and 1 (thus  $0 \neq 1$ ). Suppose addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are defined for all elements of  $F$  (except division by 0 is not defined).

Thus  $a + b, a - b, ab, \frac{a}{d} \in F$  whenever  $a, b, d \in F$  and  $d \neq 0$ .

Define  $-a = 0 - a$ .

If the following properties are satisfied by *all* elements  $a, b, c, d \in F$  with  $d \neq 0$ , then  $F$  is a **field**.

$$a + b = b + a$$

$$a + 0 = a$$

$$a + (-a) = 0$$

$$a + (-b) = a - b$$

$$a + (b + c) = (a + b) + c$$

$$a(bc) = (ab)c$$

$$a(b + c) = ab + ac$$

$$ab = ba$$

$$1a = a$$

$$\frac{a}{d}d = a$$

$\mathbb{Q}^{2 \times 2} = \{2 \times 2 \text{ matrices over } \mathbb{Q}\} = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix} : a, b, c, d \in \mathbb{Q} \right\}$  is not a field.

$$0 = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad I = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \text{ identity}$$

$$A + 0 = A, \quad AI = A = IA$$

$\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$  has no inverse.  $A \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = I$  has no solution for  $A$ .

Moreover,  $AB \neq BA$  in general.

$\mathbb{Q}^{2 \times 2}$  is a (non-commutative) ring with identity.

It has a subring  $D = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} a & 0 \\ 0 & d \end{bmatrix} : a, d \in \mathbb{Q} \right\}$  is a commutative subring with identity.

But  $D$  is not a field since it has non-invertible elements.

$D$  has zero divisors:  $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$ . A field can never have zero divisors.

(If  $d$  is a zero divisor then  $cd = 0$  where  $c, d \neq 0$  so  $\left(\frac{c}{d}\right)d = c \neq 0$ , contradiction)

For a commutative ring  $R$  with identity, being able to divide is stronger than having no zero divisors.

An example of a commutative ring with identity having no zero divisors but not a field (division fails in general) is  $\mathbb{Z}$

Eg.  $F = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ 2b & a \end{bmatrix} : a, b \in \mathbb{Q} \right\} \subset \mathbb{Q}^{2 \times 2}$  is a subring, containing  $I = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ .

If  $\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ 2b & a \end{bmatrix} \neq \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$  then  $\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ 2b & a \end{bmatrix}^{-1} = \frac{1}{a^2 - 2b^2} \begin{bmatrix} a & -b \\ -2b & a \end{bmatrix}$  (Note:  $a^2 - 2b^2 \neq 0$  since  $\sqrt{2} \notin \mathbb{Q}$ )

Why is  $F$  a commutative subring? Elements of  $F$  have the form

$\begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ 2b & a \end{bmatrix} = aI + bS$  where  $I = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}$ ,  $S = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 2 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$  so  $F = \{aI + bS : a, b \in \mathbb{Q}\}$  is the span of  $\{I, S\}$  in  $\mathbb{Q}^{2 \times 2}$  ( $F$  is a 2-dimensional subspace of  $\mathbb{Q}^{2 \times 2}$ , a 4-dimensional vector space).

$$\begin{aligned} \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{bmatrix}^{-1} &= \frac{1}{ad-bc} \begin{bmatrix} d & -b \\ -c & a \end{bmatrix} \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} \frac{d}{ad-bc} & \frac{-b}{ad-bc} \\ \frac{-c}{ad-bc} & \frac{a}{ad-bc} \end{bmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

$$(aI + bS)(cI + dS) = acI + (ad + bc)S + bdS^2 = (cI + dS)(aI + bS), \quad S^2 = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 2 & 0 \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 2 & 0 \end{bmatrix} = 2I$$

$$= (ac + 2bd)I + (ad + bc)S$$


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Compare:  $K = \mathbb{Q}[\sqrt{2}] = \{a + b\sqrt{2} : a, b \in \mathbb{Q}\}$  is a field.

$$(a + b\sqrt{2}) + (c + d\sqrt{2}) = (a + c) + (b + d)\sqrt{2}$$

$$(a + b\sqrt{2})(c + d\sqrt{2}) = ac + (ad + bc)\sqrt{2} + 2bd = (ac + 2bd) + (ad + bc)\sqrt{2}$$

Note:  $F \cong K$  (they are isomorphic)

An explicit isomorphism  $\phi: K \rightarrow F$  is given by  $\phi(a + b\sqrt{2}) = \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ 2b & a \end{bmatrix} = aI + bS$ .

$\phi$  is bijective

$$\phi(x + y) = \phi(x) + \phi(y)$$

$$\phi(xy) = \phi(x)\phi(y)$$


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Similarly  $\left\{ \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ -b & a \end{bmatrix} : a, b \in \mathbb{R} \right\} \subset \mathbb{R}^{2 \times 2}$  is a subring isomorphic to  $\mathbb{C}$ .

An isomorphism  $\mathbb{C} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ -b & a \end{bmatrix} : a, b \in \mathbb{R} \right\}$  is  $a + bi \mapsto \begin{bmatrix} a & b \\ -b & a \end{bmatrix}$  ( $a, b \in \mathbb{R}$ ).

$$\mathbb{Q}[\sqrt{2}] = \{ a + b\sqrt{2} : a, b \in \mathbb{Q} \}$$

$$\alpha = 5 + 3\sqrt{2}, \quad \beta = 7 - \sqrt{2}$$

$$\alpha + \beta = 12 + 2\sqrt{2}$$

$$\alpha - \beta = -2 + 4\sqrt{2}$$

$$\alpha\beta = (5 + 3\sqrt{2})(7 - \sqrt{2}) = 35 - 5\sqrt{2} + 21\sqrt{2} - 6 = 29 + 16\sqrt{2}$$

$$\frac{\alpha}{\beta} = \frac{5 + 3\sqrt{2}}{7 - \sqrt{2}} = \frac{5 + 3\sqrt{2}}{7 - \sqrt{2}} \cdot \frac{7 + \sqrt{2}}{7 + \sqrt{2}} = \frac{35 + 5\sqrt{2} + 21\sqrt{2} + 6}{47} = \frac{41 + 26\sqrt{2}}{47} = \frac{41}{47} + \frac{26}{47}\sqrt{2}$$

Alternatively,  $\frac{\alpha}{\beta} = \alpha\beta^{-1}$

in matrix representation:  $\begin{bmatrix} 5 & 3 \\ 6 & 5 \end{bmatrix} \cdot \frac{1}{47} \begin{bmatrix} 7 & 1 \\ 2 & 7 \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{47} \begin{bmatrix} 41 & 26 \\ 52 & 41 \end{bmatrix}$

$$\beta \mapsto \begin{bmatrix} 7 & -1 \\ -2 & 7 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\beta^{-1} \mapsto \frac{1}{47} \begin{bmatrix} 7 & 1 \\ 2 & 7 \end{bmatrix}$$

Similar:  $\mathbb{Q}[\sqrt[3]{2}] = \mathbb{Q}[\theta], \quad \theta = \sqrt[3]{2}$ .

$\{ a + b\theta : a, b \in \mathbb{Q} \}$  is not a field, not even a ring,

$\mathbb{Q}[\theta] = \{ a + b\theta + c\theta^2 : a, b, c \in \mathbb{Q} \}$  is a field.

since it's not closed under multiplication.

$$\alpha = 5 + 3\theta$$

$$\beta = 7 - \theta$$

$$\alpha + \beta = 12 + 2\theta$$

$$\alpha - \beta = -2 + 4\theta$$

$$\alpha\beta = (5 + 3\theta)(7 - \theta) = 35 - 5\theta + 21\theta - 3\theta^2 = 35 + 16\theta - 3\theta^2$$

$$\theta^3 = 2$$

$$\theta^4 = 2\theta$$

$$\theta^5 = 2\theta^2$$

$$\theta^6 = 4$$

$$\frac{\alpha}{\beta} = \frac{5+3\theta}{7-\theta} = \frac{a}{1} + \frac{b}{\theta} + \frac{c}{\theta^2} = \frac{251}{341} + \frac{182}{341}\theta + \frac{26}{341}\theta^2 = \frac{1}{341}(251 + 182\theta + 26\theta^2)$$

$$\theta^3 = 2$$

$$\theta^3 - 2 = 0$$

$$\theta = \sqrt[3]{2}$$

rational coefficients  
 $a, b, c \in \mathbb{Q}$

$\theta$  is a root of  $x^3 - 2 = (x - \theta)(x^2 + \theta x + \theta^2)$

$$\begin{aligned} 5 + 3\theta &= (a + b\theta + c\theta^2)(7 - \theta) \\ &= 7a + (7b - a)\theta + (7c - b)\theta^2 - 2c \\ &= (7a - 2c) + (7b - a)\theta + (7c - b)\theta^2 \end{aligned}$$

Hopefully

$$\begin{aligned} 7a - 2c &= 5 \\ -a + 7b &= 3 \\ -b + 7c &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

$$\left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 7 & 0 & -2 & 5 \\ -1 & 7 & 0 & 3 \\ 0 & -1 & 7 & 0 \end{array} \right] \sim \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 0 & 19 & -2 & 26 \\ -1 & 7 & 0 & 3 \\ 0 & -1 & 7 & 0 \end{array} \right] \sim \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & -7 & 0 & -3 \\ 0 & 19 & -2 & 26 \\ 0 & 1 & -7 & 0 \end{array} \right]$$

$$\sim \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & -7 & 0 & -3 \\ 0 & 1 & -7 & 0 \\ 0 & 19 & -2 & 26 \end{array} \right] \sim \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & -49 & -3 \\ 0 & 1 & -7 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 341 & 26 \end{array} \right] \sim \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & -49 & -3 \\ 0 & 1 & -7 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \frac{26}{341} \end{array} \right]$$

$$\sim \left[ \begin{array}{ccc|c} 1 & 0 & 0 & \frac{251}{341} \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & \frac{182}{341} \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \frac{26}{341} \end{array} \right]$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 26 \\ 7 \\ \hline 182 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 49 \\ 26 \\ \hline 244 \\ 98 \\ \hline 1274 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 341 \\ 5 \\ \hline 1023 \end{array}$$

$$= -3 + 49 \cdot \frac{26}{341}$$

$$= -3 + \frac{1274}{341}$$

$$= \frac{-1023 + 1274}{341} = \frac{251}{341}$$

$$\text{Check: } \frac{1}{341}(251 + 182\theta + 26\theta^2)(7 - \theta) = \frac{1}{341}(1757 + 1023\theta + 0\theta^2 - 52)$$

$$= \frac{1}{341}(1705 + 1023\theta)$$

$$= 5 + 3\theta \quad \checkmark$$

Alternatively, use  $3 \times 3$  matrices to represent elements of  $\mathbb{Q}[\theta]$ .