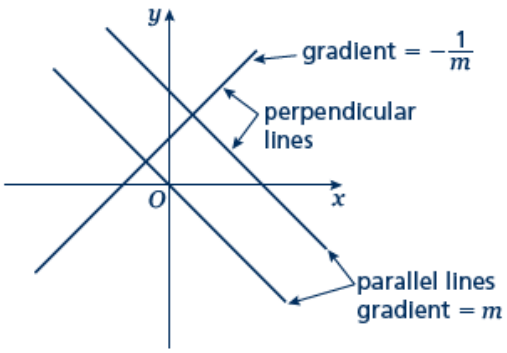
Parallel and perpendicular lines

A LEVEL LINKS
Scheme of work: 2a. Straight-line graphs, parallel/perpendicular, length and area problems

Key points

- When lines are parallel they have the same gradient.
- A line perpendicular to the line with equation $y = mx + c$ has gradient $-\frac{1}{m}$.



Examples

Example 1 Find the equation of the line parallel to $y = 2x + 4$ which passes through the point (4, 9).

$y = 2x + 4$ $m = 2$ $y = 2x + c$ $9 = 2 \times 4 + c$ $9 = 8 + c$ $c = 1$ $y = 2x + 1$	**1** As the lines are parallel they have the same gradient. **2** Substitute $m = 2$ into the equation of a straight line $y = mx + c$. **3** Substitute the coordinates into the equation $y = 2x + c$ **4** Simplify and solve the equation. **5** Substitute $c = 1$ into the equation $y = 2x + c$

Example 2 Find the equation of the line perpendicular to $y = 2x - 3$ which passes through the point $(-2, 5)$.

$y = 2x - 3$ $m = 2$ $-\frac{1}{m} = -\frac{1}{2}$ $y = -\frac{1}{2}x + c$ $5 = -\frac{1}{2} \times (-2) + c$ $5 = 1 + c$ $c = 4$ $y = -\frac{1}{2}x + 4$	**1** As the lines are perpendicular, the gradient of the perpendicular line is $-\frac{1}{m}$. **2** Substitute $m = -\frac{1}{2}$ into $y = mx + c$. **3** Substitute the coordinates $(-2, 5)$ into the equation $y = -\frac{1}{2}x + c$ **4** Simplify and solve the equation. **5** Substitute $c = 4$ into $y = -\frac{1}{2}x + c$.

Example 3 A line passes through the points (0, 5) and (9, −1).
Find the equation of the line which is perpendicular to the line and passes through its midpoint.

$x_1 = 0$, $x_2 = 9$, $y_1 = 5$ and $y_2 = -1$ $m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1} = \frac{-1-5}{9-0}$ $= \frac{-6}{9} = -\frac{2}{3}$ $-\frac{1}{m} = \frac{3}{2}$ $y = \frac{3}{2}x + c$ Midpoint $= \left(\frac{0+9}{2}, \frac{5+(-1)}{2}\right) = \left(\frac{9}{2}, 2\right)$ $2 = \frac{3}{2} \times \frac{9}{2} + c$ $c = -\frac{19}{4}$ $y = \frac{3}{2}x - \frac{19}{4}$	**1** Substitute the coordinates into the equation $m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1}$ to work out the gradient of the line. **2** As the lines are perpendicular, the gradient of the perpendicular line is $-\frac{1}{m}$. **3** Substitute the gradient into the equation $y = mx + c$. **4** Work out the coordinates of the midpoint of the line. **5** Substitute the coordinates of the midpoint into the equation. **6** Simplify and solve the equation. **7** Substitute $c = -\frac{19}{4}$ into the equation $y = \frac{3}{2}x + c$.

Practice

1 Find the equation of the line parallel to each of the given lines and which passes through each of the given points.

a $y = 3x + 1$ (3, 2) **b** $y = 3 - 2x$ (1, 3)

c $2x + 4y + 3 = 0$ (6, –3) **d** $2y - 3x + 2 = 0$ (8, 20)

2 Find the equation of the line perpendicular to $y = \frac{1}{2}x - 3$ which passes through the point (–5, 3).

Hint
If $m = \frac{a}{b}$ then the negative reciprocal $-\frac{1}{m} = -\frac{b}{a}$

3 Find the equation of the line perpendicular to each of the given lines and which passes through each of the given points.

a $y = 2x - 6$ (4, 0) **b** $y = -\frac{1}{3}x + \frac{1}{2}$ (2, 13)

c $x - 4y - 4 = 0$ (5, 15) **d** $5y + 2x - 5 = 0$ (6, 7)

4 In each case find an equation for the line passing through the origin which is also perpendicular to the line joining the two points given.

a (4, 3), (–2, –9) **b** (0, 3), (–10, 8)

Extend

5 Work out whether these pairs of lines are parallel, perpendicular or neither.

a $y = 2x + 3$, $y = 2x - 7$ **b** $y = 3x$, $2x + y - 3 = 0$ **c** $y = 4x - 3$, $4y + x = 2$

d $3x - y + 5 = 0$, $x + 3y = 1$ **e** $2x + 5y - 1 = 0$, $y = 2x + 7$ **f** $2x - y = 6$, $6x - 3y + 3 = 0$

6 The straight line $\mathbf{L_1}$ passes through the points A and B with coordinates (–4, 4) and (2, 1), respectively.

a Find the equation of $\mathbf{L_1}$ in the form $ax + by + c = 0$

The line $\mathbf{L_2}$ is parallel to the line $\mathbf{L_1}$ and passes through the point C with coordinates (–8, 3).

b Find the equation of $\mathbf{L_2}$ in the form $ax + by + c = 0$

The line $\mathbf{L_3}$ is perpendicular to the line $\mathbf{L_1}$ and passes through the origin.

c Find an equation of $\mathbf{L_3}$

Answers

1 **a** $y = 3x - 7$ **b** $y = -2x + 5$

c $y = -\frac{1}{2}x$ **d** $y = \frac{3}{2}x + 8$

2 $y = -2x - 7$

3 **a** $y = -\frac{1}{2}x + 2$ **b** $y = 3x + 7$

c $y = -4x + 35$ **d** $y = \frac{5}{2}x - 8$

4 **a** $y = -\frac{1}{2}x$ **b** $y = 2x$

5 **a** Parallel **b** Neither **c** Perpendicular

d Perpendicular **e** Neither **f** Parallel

6 **a** $x + 2y - 4 = 0$ **b** $x + 2y + 2 = 0$ **c** $y = 2x$