

Weyl Algebra

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Let k be a field of characteristic zero and $K[x] = K[x_1, \dots, x_n]$ the ring of polynomials in n commuting indeterminates over K where n is some positive integer.

Let $\partial/\partial x_1, \dots, \partial/\partial x_n$ be the usual K -linear derivations on $K[x]$. Then the K -linear map $\partial/\partial x_i$ maps a polynomial into $\partial f/\partial x_i$.

We will use the notation $\partial = \partial/\partial x_i$ so that $\partial_i(f) = \partial f/\partial x_i$.

Definitions The ring of K -linear operators on $K[x]$ which is generated by the derivations $\partial_1, \dots, \partial_n$ and the multiplication operators defined by the polynomials in $K[x]$, is called the ring of K -linear differential operators on $K[x]$.

This ring is denoted by $A_n(K)$ and known as Weyl algebra in n variable. For $1 \leq i \leq n$, consider the operator $\partial_i x_i$ in the ring $A_n(K)$. Apply it to a polynomial $f \in K[x]$. Using the chain rule, we get,

$$\partial_i(x_i f) = \partial_i(x_i) f + x_i \partial_i(f).$$

In other words,

$$\partial_i x_i = 1 + x_i \partial_i$$

Where 1 is the identity operator. We can rewrite this formula by using commutators.

If $P, Q \in A_n(K)$ then their commutator is the operator $[P, Q] = PQ - QP$. Thus, the above formula becomes,

$$[\partial_i, x_i] = 1$$

In the similar way we can get that

$$[\partial_i, x_j] = \delta_{ij},$$

$$[\partial_i, \partial_j] = [x_i, x_j] = 0$$

where $1 \leq i, j \leq n$. Here, δ_{ij} is the Kronecker delta symbol: it equals 1 if $i=j$ and zero otherwise.

We will use multi index notation. A multi index is an element of $\mathbb{Z}_{\geq 0}^n$, say $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n)$. Now by x^α we mean the monomial $x_1^{\alpha_1} \dots x_n^{\alpha_n}$ and similarly ∂^β denotes a ∂ -monomial $\partial_1^{\beta_1} \dots \partial_n^{\beta_n}$.

Here the length $|\alpha|$ of multi-index α is,

$$|\alpha| = \alpha_1 + \dots + \alpha_n,$$

and the degree of X^α is $|\alpha|$.

Theorem: The ring $A_n(K)$ is simple. That is, if J is a two-sided ideal, then $J=0$ or $J=A_n(K)$.

Proof. Let J be a non-zero two sided ideal of $A_n(K)$. Choose $D \neq 0 \in J$. We will use induction on n . If $n=0$ then $A_0(K) = K$, which is field and the result is obvious. We can suppose that the sub algebra $K \langle x_1, \dots, x_{n-1}, \partial_1, \dots, \partial_{n-1} \rangle = A_{n-1}(K)$ is simple. Now it is enough to prove that $J \cap A_{n-1}(K) \neq 0$. Then $J \cap A_{n-1}(K) = A_{n-1}(K)$ by induction hypothesis. Since $1 \in A_{n-1}(K)$, $1 \in J$ and hence $J = A_n(K)$ follows.

To prove that $J \cap A_{n-1}(K) \neq 0$ we can write

$$D = \delta_0 + \delta_1 \partial_n + \dots + \delta_s \partial_n^s$$

Where $\{ \delta_j \}$ belongs to the sub algebra $A_{n-1}(K)[x_n]$. Here $\delta_s \neq 0$. If $s \geq 1$ we use the Relations $\partial_n^j x_n - x_n \partial_n^j = j \partial_n^{j-1}$

Then,

$$D x_n - x_n D = \delta_1 + 2\delta_2 \partial_n + \dots + s \delta_s \partial_n^{s-1}$$

Since J is a two-sided ideal, $D_1 = D x_n - x_n D \in J$. If $s \geq 2$ we can continue as above and we get

$$D_2 = D_1 x_n - x_n D_1$$

After s steps we see that J contains the non-zero element $D_s = s! \delta_s$. ($s!$ is non-zero because K has characteristic zero). Call this element E and we can write

$$E = e_0 + e_1 x_n + \dots + e_t x_n^t$$

Where $\{ e_j \}$ belong to $A_{n-1}(K)$. if $t \geq 1$ we get

$$\begin{aligned} E_1 &= \partial_n E - E \partial_n \\ &= e_1 + 2e_2 x_n + \dots + t e_t x_n^{t-1} \end{aligned}$$

After t steps we get $t! e_t \in J \cap A_{n-1}(K)$ and hence $J \cap A_{n-1}(K) \neq 0$ as required.