

PHY 256: Introduction To Quantum Physics
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Practice Questions for the Final Assessment

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1. Write the complex number $z = 3e^{i\pi}$ in Cartesian coordinates.

Answer:

$$z = 3 \cdot (-1) = -3. \quad (0.1)$$

Write the complex number $w = 1 + i$ in polar coordinates.

Answer:

$$w = \sqrt{2}e^{i\pi/4}. \quad (0.2)$$

Calculate $|z + w|$.

Answer:

$$|-3 + 1 + i| = |-2 + i| = \sqrt{5}. \quad (0.3)$$

What is the complex conjugate of $v = -5e^{-7i}$?

Answer:

$$v^* = -5e^{7i}. \quad (0.4)$$

2. Let

$$|A\rangle \equiv \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2i \end{pmatrix}, \quad |B\rangle \equiv \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 5-i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.5)$$

Calculate $\langle A|B\rangle$.

Answer:

$$\langle A|B\rangle = (1 \quad -2i) \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 5-i \end{pmatrix} = -3 - 2i(5-i) = -5 - 10i. \quad (0.6)$$

Calculate $\langle B|A\rangle$.

Answer:

$$\langle B|A\rangle = \langle A|B\rangle^* = -5 + 10i. \quad (0.7)$$

Calculate $|\langle A|B\rangle|$.

Answer:

$$|\langle A|B\rangle| = \sqrt{5^2 + 10^2} = \sqrt{125} = 5\sqrt{5}. \quad (0.8)$$

Calculate $|A\rangle + |B\rangle$.

Answer:

$$|A\rangle + |B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2i \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} -3 \\ 5-i \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ 5+i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.9)$$

Calculate $\| |A\rangle + |B\rangle \|$.

Answer:

$$\| |A\rangle + |B\rangle \| = \sqrt{2^2 + 5^2 + 1^2} = \sqrt{30}. \quad (0.10)$$

3. Let

$$|A\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2i \end{pmatrix}, \quad |B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 2i \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.11)$$

Do these vectors form an orthonormal basis?

Answer: They are linearly independent, span \mathbb{C}^2 , and orthogonal since

$$\langle A|B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -2i \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 2i \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} = 0, \quad (0.12)$$

but they are not normalized to 1. So it's an orthogonal basis, but not an orthonormal basis. We can normalize it as follows:

$$|A\rangle \mapsto \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2i \end{pmatrix}, \quad |B\rangle \mapsto \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \begin{pmatrix} 2i \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.13)$$

4. Let

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2i \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad |B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.14)$$

Calculate $A|B\rangle$ and $\langle B|A^\dagger$.

Answer:

$$A|B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2i \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ i \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 \\ -i \end{pmatrix} \quad (0.15)$$

$$\langle B|A^\dagger = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ -2i & -1 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -2 & i \end{pmatrix}, \quad (0.16)$$

or we can just calculate

$$\langle B|A^\dagger = (A|B\rangle)^\dagger. \quad (0.17)$$

5. Let

$$|A\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ i \end{pmatrix}, \quad |B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} -i \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.18)$$

Calculate $|A\rangle\langle B|$.

Answer:

$$|A\rangle\langle B| = \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ i \end{pmatrix} (i \ 2) = \begin{pmatrix} i & 2 \\ -1 & 2i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.19)$$

Calculate $\langle B|A\rangle\langle B|A\rangle$.

Answer:

$$\langle B|A\rangle\langle B|A\rangle = (i \ 2) \begin{pmatrix} i & 2 \\ -1 & 2i \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ i \end{pmatrix} = (i \ 2) \begin{pmatrix} 3i \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} = -3 - 6 = -9 \quad (0.20)$$

or just note that

$$\langle B|A\rangle = (i \ 2) \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ i \end{pmatrix} = i + 2i = 3i, \quad (0.21)$$

so

$$\langle B|A\rangle\langle B|A\rangle = \langle B|A\rangle^2 = -9. \quad (0.22)$$

6. Let

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{13}} \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 3i \end{pmatrix}, \quad |B\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{13}} \begin{pmatrix} 3i \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.23)$$

Calculate $|A\rangle\langle A| + |B\rangle\langle B|$.

Answer: No need to calculate, it's an orthonormal basis, so $|A\rangle\langle A| + |B\rangle\langle B|$ is just the identity matrix by the completeness relation.

7. A 2×2 matrix A satisfies for some vector $|B\rangle$

$$A|B\rangle = i|B\rangle. \quad (0.24)$$

Can this matrix be Hermitian?

Answer: No, since it has a non-real eigenvalue. Hermitian matrices can only have real eigenvalues.

Can this matrix be unitary?

Answer: Possibly, since its eigenvalues should have unit magnitude.

The matrix also satisfies for some other vector $|C\rangle$

$$A|C\rangle = i|C\rangle. \quad (0.25)$$

Is it diagonalizable?

Answer: Not necessarily, since $|C\rangle$ might be just a scalar multiple of $|B\rangle$. The matrix also satisfies for some vector $|D\rangle$

$$A|D\rangle = -i|D\rangle. \quad (0.26)$$

Is it diagonalizable?

Answer: Yes, now we know it has two different eigenvalues, so it is diagonalizable to

$$\begin{pmatrix} i & 0 \\ 0 & -i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.27)$$

8. Consider the matrix

$$A = y \begin{pmatrix} 1 & x \\ i & 1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.28)$$

For which values of x and y can this matrix represent evolution in quantum mechanics?

Answer: It has to be unitary, so its rows (or columns) must form an orthonormal basis. We see that we should take

$$x = i, \quad y = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}, \quad A = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & i \\ i & 1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.29)$$

Another way to solve this would be to calculate AA^\dagger and demand that it's the identity matrix, but that would be a much longer calculation.

9. Write down a normal 2×2 matrix that has the number $7i$ in the **top-left** element.

Answer: For example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 7i & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \implies A^\dagger = \begin{pmatrix} -7i & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad A^\dagger A = AA^\dagger = \begin{pmatrix} 49 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.30)$$

Write down a normal 2×2 matrix that has the number $7i$ in the **top-right** element.

Answer: The simplest solution is to make a Hermitian matrix, for example

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 7i \\ -7i & 0 \end{pmatrix} = A^\dagger, \quad A^\dagger A = AA^\dagger = \begin{pmatrix} -49 & 0 \\ 0 & -49 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.31)$$

10. What is the probability distribution for the sum of three coin tosses, with heads = 0 and tails = 1?

Answer: There are $2^3 = 8$ possible rolls, and the results can be numbers

between 0 and 3. We count the number of rolls that make up each possible result:

$$0 = 0 + 0 + 0, \quad 1 = 1 + 0 + 0 = 0 + 1 + 0 = 0 + 0 + 1, \quad (0.32)$$

$$2 = 1 + 1 + 0 = 1 + 0 + 1 = 0 + 1 + 1, \quad 3 = 1 + 1 + 1. \quad (0.33)$$

So the answer is:

$$P(0) = \frac{1}{8}, \quad P(1) = \frac{3}{8}, \quad P(2) = \frac{3}{8}, \quad P(3) = \frac{1}{8}. \quad (0.34)$$

What is the expected value?

Answer:

$$0 \cdot \frac{1}{8} + 1 \cdot \frac{3}{8} + 2 \cdot \frac{3}{8} + 3 \cdot \frac{1}{8} = \frac{3}{2}. \quad (0.35)$$

Or we can recall that the expected value for one coin toss is $1/2$, so for three coin tosses it will be $3/2$.

11. A qubit is in the state

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.36)$$

Write it as a superposition of the state $|+\rangle$ and $|-\rangle$, where

$$|+\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad |-\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ -1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.37)$$

Answer: We calculate that

$$\langle +|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2i \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{10}} (1 + 2i), \quad (0.38)$$

$$\langle -|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 & -1 \end{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 2i \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{10}} (1 - 2i). \quad (0.39)$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} |A\rangle &= |+\rangle \langle +|A\rangle + |-\rangle \langle -|A\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{10}} \left((1 + 2i) |+\rangle + (1 - 2i) |-\rangle \right). \end{aligned}$$

12. Find four **different** states of a qubit such that the measurement of σ_z will yield 0 with probability $2/3$ and 1 with probability $1/3$.

Answer: For example

$$\sqrt{\frac{2}{3}} |0\rangle + \sqrt{\frac{1}{3}} |1\rangle, \quad (0.40)$$

$$\sqrt{\frac{2}{3}}|0\rangle - \sqrt{\frac{1}{3}}|1\rangle, \quad (0.41)$$

$$\sqrt{\frac{2}{3}}|0\rangle + i\sqrt{\frac{1}{3}}|1\rangle, \quad (0.42)$$

$$\sqrt{\frac{2}{3}}|0\rangle - i\sqrt{\frac{1}{3}}|1\rangle. \quad (0.43)$$

The trick is that the **relative** phase between the two states in the superposition should be different. But a vector such as

$$-\sqrt{\frac{2}{3}}|0\rangle + \sqrt{\frac{1}{3}}|1\rangle \quad (0.44)$$

will represent the same state as (0.41), since they are related by an **overall** phase of -1 .

13. A qubit is in the state

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{10}} \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 3i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.45)$$

What is the expectation value for a measurement of spin along the x axis? You can use the fact that

$$S_x = \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.46)$$

Answer:

$$\begin{aligned} \langle A|S_x|A\rangle &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{10}} \begin{pmatrix} -i & -3i \end{pmatrix} \frac{1}{2} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{10}} \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 3i \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \frac{1}{20} \begin{pmatrix} -i & -3i \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 3i \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \frac{1}{20} \begin{pmatrix} -i & -3i \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 3i \\ i \end{pmatrix} \\ &= \frac{1}{20} (3 + 3) \\ &= \frac{3}{10} \end{aligned}$$

14. The measurement of spin of a particle along the z axis was 2. What can you say about the other possibilities for a measurement of spin for that particle?

Answer: For a particle of spin s , where

$$s \in \left\{ 0, \frac{1}{2}, 1, \frac{3}{2}, 2, \dots \right\}, \quad (0.47)$$

the measurement of the spin along any axis can yield any of the values

$$\{-s, -s + 1, \dots, s - 1, s\}. \quad (0.48)$$

Since 2 was the result of the measurement, we know that for this particle $s \geq 2$, and furthermore, it must be an integer (since half-integer s only allows half-integer measurement results). The other possibilities for a measurement of spin for that particle will thus be $-2, 1, 0, 1$, but there could of course be other (integer) options if $s > 2$.

15. Let

$$|A\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ i \end{pmatrix}, \quad |B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 3 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.49)$$

Calculate the tensor product $|A\rangle \otimes |B\rangle$.

Answer:

$$|A\rangle \otimes |B\rangle = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ i \end{pmatrix} \otimes \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 3 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2 \cdot \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 3 \end{pmatrix} \\ i \cdot \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 3 \end{pmatrix} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 2i \\ 6 \\ -1 \\ 3i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.50)$$

Let

$$C = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{pmatrix}, \quad D = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2 \\ 2i & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.51)$$

Calculate the tensor product $C \otimes D$.

Answer:

$$C \otimes D = \begin{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2 \\ 2i & 0 \end{pmatrix} & 0 \\ 0 & i \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2 \\ 2i & 0 \end{pmatrix} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 2i & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 2i \\ 0 & 0 & -2 & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.52)$$

Calculate the action of $C \otimes D$ on $|A\rangle \otimes |B\rangle$.

Answer:

$$(C \otimes D)(|A\rangle \otimes |B\rangle) = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 2i & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 2i \\ 0 & 0 & -2 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} 2i \\ 6 \\ -1 \\ 3i \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 12 \\ -4 \\ -6 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.53)$$

16. Consider the composite state of two qubits

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} (|00\rangle + i|01\rangle + 2|10\rangle). \quad (0.54)$$

Is it entangled?

Answer: $\alpha_{00}\alpha_{11} - \alpha_{01}\alpha_{10} = 1 \cdot 0 - i \cdot 2 = -2i \neq 0$, so it is entangled. Or instead of calculating, we can just notice by inspection that there is a correlation between the qubits, since 1 for first qubit implies that we **must** have 0 for second qubit.

Consider the composite state of two qubits

$$|B\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{6}} (i|00\rangle + 2|01\rangle - 2i|10\rangle + 4|11\rangle). \quad (0.55)$$

Is it entangled?

Answer: $\alpha_{00}\alpha_{11} - \alpha_{01}\alpha_{10} = i \cdot 4 - 2 \cdot (-2i) = 4i + 4i = 8i \neq 0$, so it is entangled. Here it is not immediately obvious that the qubits are correlated, but in fact they are!

Consider the composite state of two qubits

$$|C\rangle = \frac{1}{5} (i|00\rangle - 2|01\rangle - 2i|10\rangle + 4|11\rangle). \quad (0.56)$$

Is it entangled?

Answer: $\alpha_{00}\alpha_{11} - \alpha_{01}\alpha_{10} = i \cdot 4 - (-2) \cdot (-2i) = 4i - 4i = 0$, so it is in fact **not** entangled.

Write this state as a tensor product.

Answer:

$$\begin{aligned} |C\rangle &= \frac{1}{5} (i|0\rangle \otimes |0\rangle - 2|0\rangle \otimes |1\rangle - 2i|1\rangle \otimes |0\rangle + 4|1\rangle \otimes |1\rangle) \\ &= \frac{1}{5} (|0\rangle \otimes (i|0\rangle - 2|1\rangle) - 2|1\rangle \otimes (i|0\rangle - 2|1\rangle)) \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} (|0\rangle - 2|1\rangle) \otimes \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} (i|0\rangle - 2|1\rangle). \end{aligned}$$

17. The system was in the state

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{13}} \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 3i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.57)$$

Now it's in the state

$$U|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{13}} \begin{pmatrix} 3i \\ 2i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.58)$$

What was the unitary operator responsible for the evolution?

Answer: The components were flipped and a phase of i was added to the lower component, so

$$U = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ i & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.59)$$

What will be the state after the same amount of time has passed?

Answer:

$$U^2 |A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{13}} \begin{pmatrix} 2i \\ -3 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.60)$$

18. A qubit is given by

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ i \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.61)$$

What is the action of the NOT gate on this qubit?

Answer: The NOT gate just flips the components, so

$$\text{NOT}|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \begin{pmatrix} i \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (0.62)$$

19. The composite state of two qubits is given by

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{3} (|00\rangle + 2|01\rangle - 2i|11\rangle). \quad (0.63)$$

What is the probability to measure 0 for the **first** qubit?

Answer:

$$\left| \frac{1}{3} \right|^2 + \left| \frac{2}{3} \right|^2 = \frac{5}{9}. \quad (0.64)$$

What will be the state of the two qubits after the measurement?

Answer:

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} (|00\rangle + 2|01\rangle). \quad (0.65)$$

What is the probability to measure 1 for the **first** qubit?

Answer:

$$\left| \frac{-2i}{3} \right|^2 = \frac{4}{9}, \quad \text{or just: } 1 - \frac{5}{9} = \frac{4}{9}. \quad (0.66)$$

What will be the state of the two qubits after the measurement?

Answer:

$$|A\rangle = |11\rangle. \quad (0.67)$$

What is the probability to measure 0 for the **second** qubit?

Answer:

$$\left| \frac{1}{3} \right|^2 = \frac{1}{9}. \quad (0.68)$$

What will be the state of the two qubits after the measurement?

Answer:

$$|A\rangle = |00\rangle. \quad (0.69)$$

What is the probability to measure 1 for the **second** qubit?

Answer:

$$\left|\frac{2}{3}\right|^2 + \left|\frac{-2i}{3}\right|^2 = \frac{8}{9}, \quad \text{or just: } 1 - \frac{1}{9} = \frac{8}{9}. \quad (0.70)$$

What will be the state of the two qubits after the measurement?

Answer:

$$|A\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|01\rangle - i|11\rangle). \quad (0.71)$$