

Chapter 1

Starting with

MATLAB

This chapter begins by describing the characteristics and purpose of the different windows in MATLAB. Next, the Command Window is introduced in detail. The chapter shows how to use MATLAB for arithmetic operations with scalars in much the way that a calculator is used. This includes the use of elementary math functions with scalars. The chapter then shows how to define scalar variables (the assignment operator) and how to use these variables in arithmetic calculations. The last section in the chapter introduces script files. It shows how to write, save, and execute simple MATLAB programs.

1.1 STARTING MATLAB, MATLAB WINDOWS

It is assumed that the software is installed on the computer, and that the user can start the program. Once the program starts, the MATLAB desktop window opens with the default layout, Figure 1-1. The layout has a Toolstrip at the top, the Current Folder Toolbar below it, and four windows underneath. At the top of the Toolstrip there are three tabs: HOME, PLOTS, and APPS. Clicking on the tabs changes the icons in the Toolstrip. Commonly, MATLAB is used with the HOME tab selected. The associated icons are used for executing various commands, as explained later in this chapter. The PLOTS tab can be used to create plots, as explained in Chapter 5 (Section 5.12), and the APPS tab can be used for opening additional applications and Toolboxes of MATLAB.

The default layout

The default layout (Figure 1-1) consists of the following four windows that are displayed under the Toolstrip: the Command Window (larger window at the center), the Current Folder Window (on the left) and the Workspace and Command History windows (on the right). A list of several MATLAB windows and their purposes is given in Table 1-1.

Four of the windows—the Command Window, the Figure Window, the Editor Window, and the Help Window—are used extensively throughout the book and

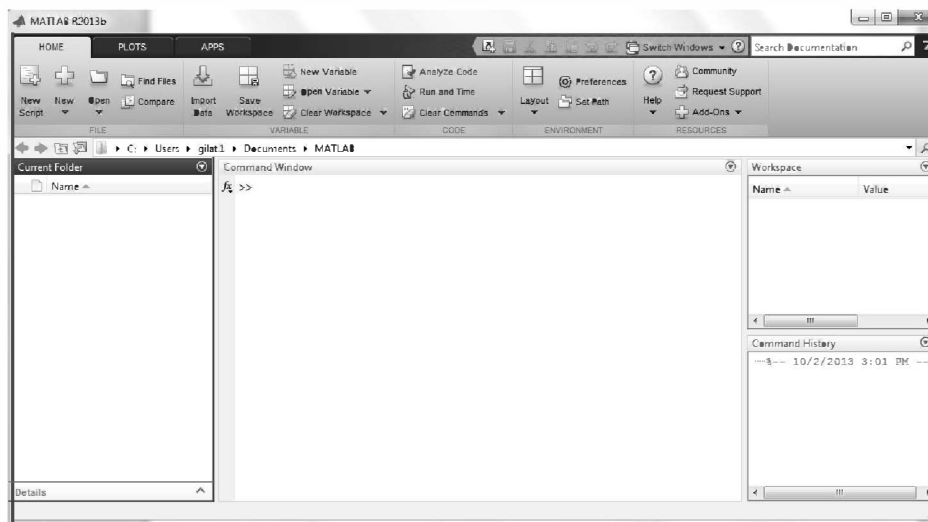


Figure 1-1: The default view of MATLAB desktop.

are briefly described on the following pages. More detailed descriptions are included in the chapters where they are used. The Command History Window, Current Folder Window, and the Workspace Window are described in Sections 1.2, 1.8.4, and 4.1, respectively.

Command Window: The Command Window is MATLAB's main window and opens when MATLAB is started. It is convenient to have the Command Window as the only visible window. This can be done either by closing all the other windows, or by selecting **Command Window Only** in the menu that opens when the **Layout** icon on the Toolbar is selected. To close a window, click on the pull-down menu at the top right-hand side of the window and then select Close. Working in the Command Window is described in detail in Section 1.2.

Table 1-1: MATLAB windows

Window	Purpose
Command Window	Main window, enters variables, runs programs.
Figure Window	Contains output from graphic commands.
Editor Window	Creates and debugs script and function files.
Help Window	Provides help information.
Command History Window	Logs commands entered in the Command Window.

Table 1-1: MATLAB windows

Window	Purpose
Workspace Window	Provides information about the variables that are stored.
Current Folder Window	Shows the files in the current folder.

Figure Window: The Figure Window opens automatically when graphics commands are executed, and contains graphs created by these commands. An example of a Figure Window is shown in Figure 1-2. A more detailed description of this window is given in Chapter 5.

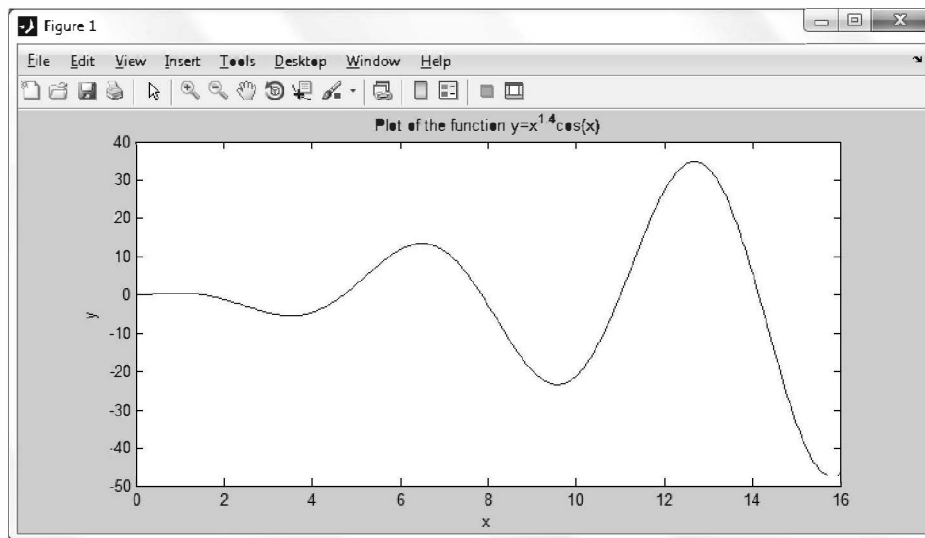


Figure 1-2: Example of a Figure Window.

Editor Window: The Editor Window is used for writing and editing programs. This window is opened by clicking on the **New Script** icon in the **Toolstrip**, or by clicking on the **New** icon and then selecting **Script** from the menu that opens. An example of an Editor Window is shown in Figure 1-3. More details on the Editor Window are given in Section 1.8.2, where it is used for writing script files, and in Chapter 7, where it is used to write function files.

Help Window: The Help Window contains help information. This window can be opened from the **Help** icon in the **Toolstrip** of the **Command Window** or the toolbar of any MATLAB window. The Help Window is interactive and can be used to obtain information on any feature of MATLAB. Figure 1-4 shows an open Help Window.

When MATLAB is started for the first time, the screen looks like that shown in Figure 1-1. For most beginners it is probably more convenient to close all the

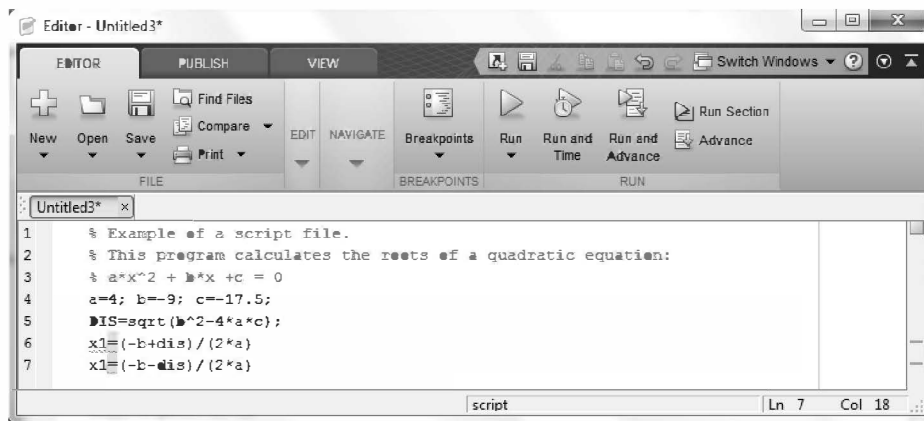


Figure 1-3: Example of an Editor Window.

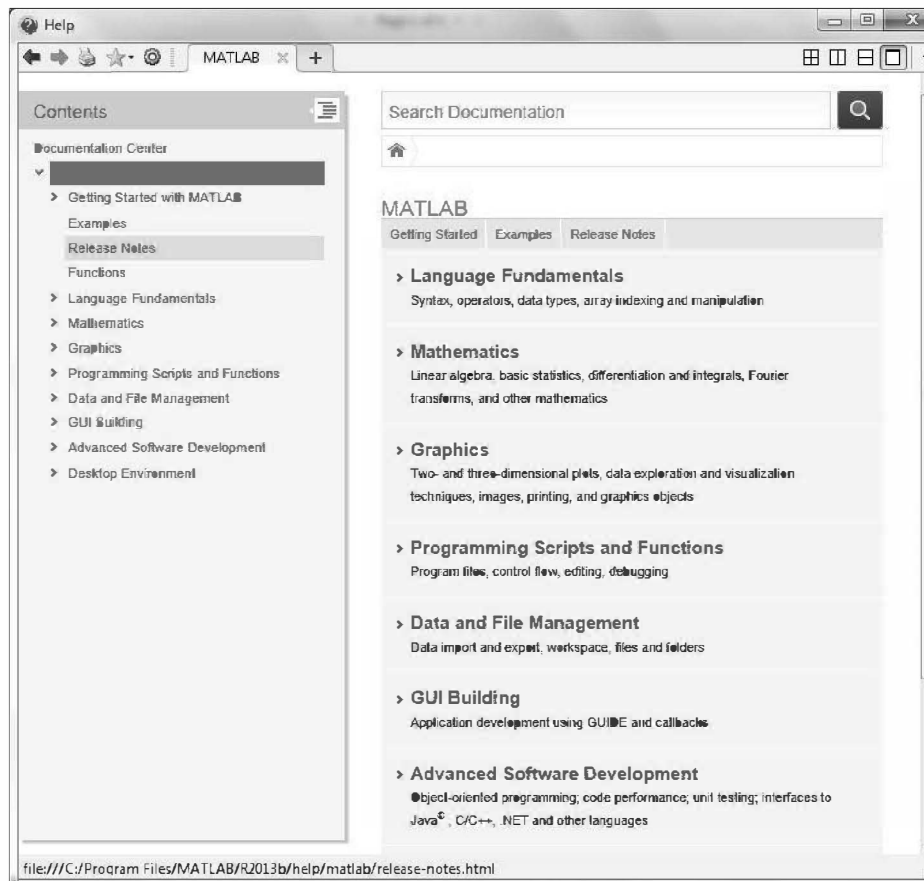


Figure 1-4: The Help Window.

windows except the Command Window. The closed windows can be reopened by selecting them from the **layout** icon in the Toolstrip. The windows shown in Figure 1-1 can be displayed by clicking on the **layout** icon and selecting **Default** in the menu that opens. The various windows in Figure 1-1 are docked to the desktop. A window can be undocked (become a separate, independent window) by dragging it out. An independent window can be redocked by clicking on the pull-down menu at the top right-hand side of the window and then selecting **Dock**.

1.2 WORKING IN THE COMMAND WINDOW

The Command Window is MATLAB's main window and can be used for executing commands, opening other windows, running programs written by the user, and managing the software. An example of the Command Window, with several simple commands that will be explained later in this chapter, is shown in Figure 1-5.

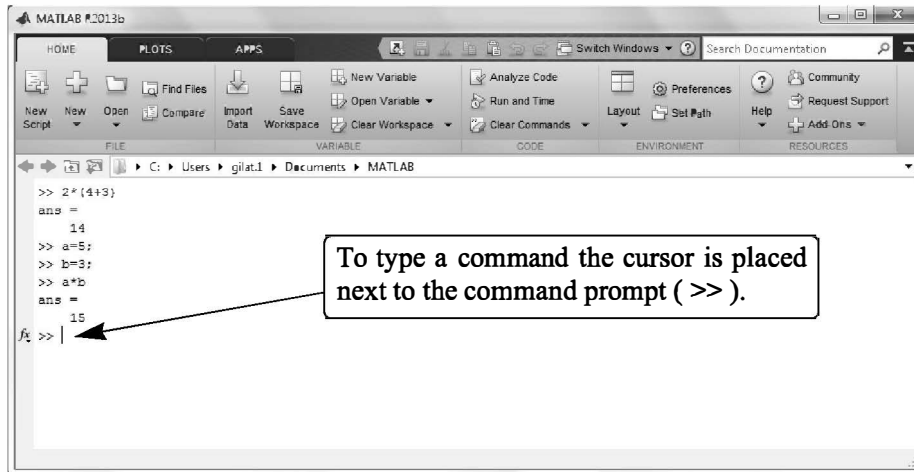


Figure 1-5: The Command Window.

Notes for working in the Command Window:

- To type a command, the cursor must be placed next to the command prompt (>>).
- Once a command is typed and the **Enter** key is pressed, the command is executed. However, only the last command is executed. Everything executed previously (that might be still displayed) is unchanged.
- Several commands can be typed in the same line. This is done by typing a comma between the commands. When the **Enter** key is pressed, the commands are executed in order from left to right.
- It is not possible to go back to a previous line that is displayed in the Command Window, make a correction, and then re-execute the command.

- A previously typed command can be recalled to the command prompt with the up-arrow key (↑). When the command is displayed at the command prompt, it can be modified if needed and then executed. The down-arrow key (↓) can be used to move down the list of previously typed commands.
- If a command is too long to fit in one line, it can be continued to the next line by typing three periods ... (called an ellipsis) and pressing the **Enter** key. The continuation of the command is then typed in the new line. The command can continue line after line up to a total of 4,096 characters.

The semicolon (;):

When a command is typed in the Command Window and the **Enter** key is pressed, the command is executed. Any output that the command generates is displayed in the Command Window. If a semicolon (;) is typed at the end of a command, the output of the command is not displayed. Typing a semicolon is useful when the result is obvious or known, or when the output is very large.

If several commands are typed in the same line, the output from any of the commands will not be displayed if a semicolon instead of a comma is typed between the commands.

Typing %:

When the symbol % (percent) is typed at the beginning of a line, the line is designated as a comment. This means that when the **Enter** key is pressed the line is not executed. The % character followed by text (comment) can also be typed after a command (in the same line). This has no effect on the execution of the command.

Usually there is no need for comments in the Command Window. Comments, however, are frequently used in a program to add descriptions or to explain the program (see Chapters 4 and 6).

The `clc` command:

The `clc` command (type `clc` and press **Enter**) clears the Command Window. After typing in the Command Window for a while, the display may become very long. Once the `clc` command is executed, a clear window is displayed. The command does not change anything that was done before. For example, if some variables were defined previously (see Section 1.6), they still exist and can be used. The up-arrow key can also be used to recall commands that were typed before.

The Command History Window:

The Command History Window lists the commands that have been entered in the Command Window. This includes commands from previous sessions. A command in the Command History Window can be used again in the Command Window. By double-clicking on the command, the command is reentered in the Command Window and executed. It is also possible to drag the command to the Command Window, make changes if needed, and then execute it. The list in the Command History Window can be cleared by selecting the lines to be deleted and

then right-clicking the mouse and selecting **Delete Selection**. The whole history can be deleted by right-clicking the mouse and selecting choose **Clear Command History** in the menu that opens.

1.3 ARITHMETIC OPERATIONS WITH SCALARS

In this chapter we discuss only arithmetic operations with scalars, which are numbers. As will be explained later in the chapter, numbers can be used in arithmetic calculations directly (as with a calculator) or they can be assigned to variables, which can subsequently be used in calculations. The symbols of arithmetic operations are:

Operation	Symbol	Example
Addition	+	$5 + 3$
Subtraction	-	$5 - 3$
Multiplication	*	$5 * 3$
Right division	/	$5 / 3$
Left division	\	$5 \setminus 3 = 3 / 5$
Exponentiation	^	$5 \wedge 3$ (means $5^3 = 125$)

It should be pointed out here that all the symbols except the left division are the same as in most calculators. For scalars, the left division is the inverse of the right division. The left division, however, is mostly used for operations with arrays, which are discussed in Chapter 3.

1.3.1 Order of Precedence

MATLAB executes the calculations according to the order of precedence displayed below. This order is the same as used in most calculators.

Precedence	Mathematical Operation
First	Parentheses. For nested parentheses, the innermost are executed first.
Second	Exponentiation.
Third	Multiplication, division (equal precedence).
Fourth	Addition and subtraction.

In an expression that has several operations, higher-precedence operations are executed before lower-precedence operations. If two or more operations have the same precedence, the expression is executed from left to right. As illustrated in the next section, parentheses can be used to change the order of calculations.

1.3.2 Using MATLAB as a Calculator

The simplest way to use MATLAB is as a calculator. This is done in the Command Window by typing a mathematical expression and pressing the **Enter** key. MATLAB calculates the expression and responds by displaying `ans =` followed by the numerical result of the expression in the next line. This is demonstrated in Tutorial 1-1.

Tutorial 1-1: Using MATLAB as a calculator.

```
>> 7+8/2
ans =
    11
>> (7+8)/2
ans =
    7.5000
>> 4+5/3+2
ans =
    7.6667
>> 5^3/2
ans =
    62.5000
>> 27^(1/3)+32^0.2
ans =
    5
>> 27^1/3+32^0.2
ans =
    11
>> 0.7854 - (0.7854)^3/(1*2*3) + 0.785^5/(1*2*3*4*5) ...
- (0.785)^7/(1*2*3*4*5*6*7)
ans =
    0.7071
>>
```

← Type and press **Enter**.
8/2 is executed first.

← Type and press **Enter**.
7+8 is executed first.

5/3 is executed first.

5^3 is executed first, /2 is executed next.

1/3 is executed first, 27^(1/3) and 32^0.2 are executed next, and + is executed last.

27^1 and 32^0.2 are executed first, /3 is executed next, and + is executed last.

← Type three periods ... (and press **Enter**) to continue the expression on the next line.

The last expression is the first four terms of the Taylor series for $\sin(\pi/4)$.

1.4 DISPLAY FORMATS

The user can control the format in which MATLAB displays output on the screen. In Tutorial 1-1, the output format is fixed-point with four decimal digits (called short), which is the default format for numerical values. The format can be

changed with the `format` command. Once the `format` command is entered, all the output that follows is displayed in the specified format. Several of the available formats are listed and described in Table 1-2.

MATLAB has several other formats for displaying numbers. Details of these formats can be obtained by typing `help format` in the Command Window. The format in which numbers are displayed does not affect how MATLAB computes and saves numbers.

Table 1-2: Display formats

Command	Description	Example
<code>format short</code>	Fixed-point with 4 decimal digits for: $0.001 \leq \textit{number} \leq 1000$ Otherwise display format short e.	<pre>>> 290/7 ans = 41.4286</pre>
<code>format long</code>	Fixed-point with 15 decimal digits for: $0.001 \leq \textit{number} \leq 100$ Otherwise display format long e.	<pre>>> 290/7 ans = 41.428571428571431</pre>
<code>format short e</code>	Scientific notation with 4 decimal digits.	<pre>>> 290/7 ans = 4.1429e+001</pre>
<code>format long e</code>	Scientific notation with 15 decimal digits.	<pre>>> 290/7 ans = 4.142857142857143e+001</pre>
<code>format short g</code>	Best of 5-digit fixed or floating point.	<pre>>> 290/7 ans = 41.429</pre>
<code>format long g</code>	Best of 15-digit fixed or floating point.	<pre>>> 290/7 ans = 41.4285714285714</pre>
<code>format bank</code>	Two decimal digits.	<pre>>> 290/7 ans = 41.43</pre>
<code>format compact</code>	Eliminates empty lines to allow more lines with information displayed on the screen.	
<code>format loose</code>	Adds empty lines (opposite of compact).	