T-Notes: For Problem Solving and Procedural Knowledge

T-Notes are a powerful, easy-to-use note-taking strategy that helps you organize information visually using a two-column format. You draw a large “T” on your paper: on the left side, you write key terms, questions, or main ideas; on the right side, you write explanations, answers, or supporting details. Use T-Notes during lectures, readings, or study sessions to break information down into manageable parts.

This method helps you actively engage with the material, clarify your thinking, and prepare for tests more effectively. Whether you're reviewing a textbook or listening in class, T-Notes make your learning more focused and organized.

Major Topic/Equation

SOLVE	**EXPLAIN**
1. Complete a practice problem or example.	2. Explain the example in your own words step-by-step. You can write this down or recite it outloud. 3. Consider: “If…then…” If one part of the example changes, what would you need to know or do differently? Be sure you can use your understanding to correctly solve a new problem or example of the same variety.

One of the best ways to study with T-Notes is by using the cover-and-recall method. Simply fold or cover the right side of the paper so that only the left column is visible. Then, try to recall or explain the information from memory before checking the right side to see if you were correct.

This active recall technique strengthens your understanding, helps you identify what you still need to review, and makes your study sessions much more effective than just rereading your notes.

Pauk, W., & Owens, R. J. Q. (2013). How to Study in College (11th ed.). Cengage Learning.

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Use this page to create your own T-Notes for a class or practice with a topic from one of your classes:

SOLVE	EXPLAIN
1.	2. 3.

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