**Word stress rules**

1. *Stress on first syllable*Most two-syllable nouns and adjectives have stress on the first syllable:  
   e.g. BUTter PRETty
2. *Stress on last syllable*Most two-syllable verbs have stress on the last syllable:  
   e.g. beGIN proDUCE
3. *Stress on penultimate syllable* (second from the end)  
   Words ending in ‘ic’:  
   e.g. STAtic reaLIStic  
   Words ending in ‘sion’ and ‘tion’:  
   e.g. teleVIsion soLUtion
4. *Stress on anto-penultimate syllable* (third from end)  
   Words ending in ‘cy, ‘ty’, ‘phy’, ‘gy’:   
   e.g. deMOcracy reliaBIlity   
   Words ending in ‘al’:  
   e.g. CRitical ecoNOmical
5. *‘Polysyllabic’ words* (words with many syllables)  
   These usually have more than one stress, i.e. a ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ stress:  
   e.g. interNAtional antibiOtic  
   often such words contain a prefix (as with ‘inter’ and ‘anti’ above) and this prefix has a secondary stress (this is common with many long technical words).
6. *‘Compound’ words* (words with two parts)  
   If the compound is a noun, the stress goes on the first part:  
   e.g. GREENhouse BLACKbird  
   If the compound is an adjective, the stress goes on the second part:  
   e.g. bad-TEMPered old-FASHioned  
   If the compound is a verb, the stress goes on the second part:  
   e.g. underSTAND overLOOK

Speaking Clearly, Rogerson & Gilbert, CUP