Introduction to Accents

Syllable names
Only the last three syllables in a word can take an accent:

Ultima = last syllable
Penult = next to last syllable
Antepenult = before the penult syllable

Quantity (Short or Long) of vowels and diphthongs
Short: vowels: ɛ, ɔ; diphthongs: just ʌɪ, ɔɪ in end-position
Long: vowels: η, ɔ; diphthongs: all except ʌɪ and ɔɪ in end-position; iota subscripts: Ѡ, η, ψ
Short or Long: vowels α, ι, υ (learn by observing how they act)

Types of Accent & Possible Positions:

Antepenult penult ultima
Acute (’) on any of last three syllables ’’’
Circumflex (‘) on any of last two syllables ‘ ‘
Grave (‘) on last syllable only ‘

Six Accent Rules
1. Verbs are recessive: their accent recedes towards the first syllable (antepenult) as far as is possible.
2. Substantives (Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives) are retentive (persistent): They tend to keep their accents on the same syllable as in the “lexical” (or “dictionary”) form.
3. If the ultima is long, then the antepenult cannot be accented.
4. If the ultima is long, and if the penult is accented, then it must be acute.
5. A short ultima with a long penult must be a circumflex if it is accented.
6. Acute on the last syllable (ultima) is changed to a grave when followed by another word.

Circumflex accent goes only on long syllables.

Accent on Antepenult

If short ultima and 3 or more syllables, then acute accent may be on antepenult
If long ultima and 3 or more syllables, then acute moves from antepenult to penult.

Accent on Penult

Circumflex only with a short ultima and long, accented penult.
Acute on all other combinations.

Accent on Ultima

If an acute accent is on the ultima followed by a word and no punctuation in between, then the acute changes to grave
Circumflex in verbs usually indicates a contract verb

Procedure for Determining Accent:
1. Place accent temporarily in “starting” position:
   A. If Verb (remember, it has “recessive” accent), move as far back from ultima as rules will permit.
   B. If noun (remember, it has “persistent” accent), look up word in dictionary and start with accent type and position as given in this “lexical” form.
2. With accenting this “starting” position:
   A. Use appropriate section of General Rules above
   B. Find correct sub-section and accent according to syllable pattern.