Latin Accentuation

General Rules for Accentuation:

1. Accent the second-to-last syllable, unless that syllable is short:
   
   for- **TÛ-na**     **a-MÂ-mus**     **Ro-MÂ-ni**.

2. Accent the third-to-last syllable if the second-to-last syllable is short:
   
   phi-lo **SO phi-a**     **pe-CÛ-ni-a**     **HO-mi-nis**

The essential rule is: Accent long penultimates, otherwise antepenultimates.

**Hint:** The last syllable is never accented. If the word has only two syllables, the accent must be on the first syllable: **magna cum lau-de; car-pe di-em; ex post fac-to; al-ma ma-ter.**

**Hint:** With words of more than two syllables you will only have the choice of second-to-last or third-to-last. Pick the second-to-last if it is long. Remember the phrase *mystérium tremândum*. The -ri-is not a long syllable, so the accent falls back to the third-to-last syllable. The -en- is long by the rules below, so it takes the accent.

General rules for Syllable Length:

1. **Syllables** are long if they contain a long vowel (often indicated by a punctuation mark): **ser-vâ-re.**

2. **Syllables** are long if they contain a “double-vowel sound” (diphthong): **sae-pe; lau-das.**

3. Syllables are long if their vowel sound is placed before two consonants:
   
   **pu-el-la**     **ter-ra**     **a-du-les-cen-ti-a**     **sum-ma**

But see the exceptions below.

Exceptions to the Syllable-length Rules

1. Double-sounds like the letter X count as two consonant-sounds.

2. Single-sounds even if written with two letters, count as one sound (**ch, ph, th**).

3. A stop (**p, b, t, d, c, g**) plus a liquid (**l, r**) can count as one consonant: **te-nebra.**

**Hint:** Learn the principles in the first box above before you go on to learn the second; learn the third box last. But you will need to know all these boxes to apply the rules correctly.