

Three-syllable adjectives

Three-syllable adjectives are often stressed on the first syllable, e.g. 'general, 'delicate, 'excellent, 'wonderful, 'favourite, 'curious.

Some adjectives have primary stress on the last syllable if there is a long vowel or a diphthong in it and secondary stress on the first syllable,
e.g. 'obso'lete, 'Vietna'mese, 'Portu'guese.

Some adjectives do not follow the stress pattern of the noun from which they are derived and are stressed on the second syllable, e.g. 'gene - ge'neric, 'symbol - sym'bolic, 'instinct - ins'tinctive.

Three-syllable adjectives

- ① Three-syllable verbs often have stress on the first syllable, e.g. 'organize, 'modernize, 'signify, 'specify, 'compensate, 'decorate, 'compliment, 'constitute.
- ② But many verbs, especially those with prefixes, have stress on the second syllable, e.g. con'tinue, con'sider, re'member.
- ③ If the prefix consists of two syllables, its first syllable usually gets secondary stress, e.g. 'under'stand, 'decom'pose,, 'contra'dict, 'corre'spond.

Notes

English three-syllable adjectives and verbs often have stress on the first syllable, but there are many exceptions.