Insightful, acutely intelligent, wise and perceptive.

Perspicacious is an adjective that means "shrewd" and "wise." A perspicacious child can't be fooled when her parents try to keep a secret by talking in Pig Latin.

The adjective perspicacious is a long word for a short definition: "keen" or "shrewd." This word is descended from the Latin word perspicere, which means "to look closely." In other words, if you look closely at something you are paying attention to it and know it well. A definition of perspicacious that is out of date but still relevant is "having keen eyesight" and people who can see clearly are also aware and attentive!

DEFINITIONS AND USAGE EXAMPLES

Pronunciation: (pûr′spî-kă′shəs)

- Mentally acute; penetratingly discerning.
- Acutely insightful and wise.
- Observant and perceptive.
  - "...much too perspicacious to be taken in by so spurious an argument."
  - Many perspicacious investors sold their tech stocks long before the market crashed.
  - The perspicacious teacher had no problem identifying the two students who had cheated on the exam.
  - The perspicacious salesman earned a great living because he knew how to read his customers.

Other Forms: perspicaciously, perspicacity, perspicaciousness

Directions: Discuss the meaning of the word with your students, with special emphasis on any variations or nuances of the word specific to your discipline. Consider taking it a step further by using one or all of the following ideas as you involve students with the new vocabulary. Remember to preview all content you intend to share with students. Not all items on the lists provided below are appropriate for all classes or age levels.
Dave Brubeck Obituary
American pianist and composer Dave Brubeck, has died at 91. He was a figure simultaneously feted and mugged by ecstatic fans and infuriated purists during the years between 1954 and 1966 – the time when his catchiest and most deftly composed records were pop hits.

Like the Modern Jazz Quartet, which enjoyed similar commercial success in that period, Brubeck's music flattered and engaged the young white middle-class, and particularly the student population, much as the classical-sounding clarinettist Benny Goodman's work had done in the mid-1930s. Brubeck interwove jazz swing with time-signatures that looked like algebra, and mingled standard song-forms with rondos and fugues. All kinds of music fans who would have hated to be seen with a jazz album owned Brubeck records in the 60s, just as they own Diana Krall, Jan Garbarek or Keith Jarrett discs today.

... Brubeck's pieces are now recognized for the harmonically subtle, melodically devious and original works they are, and his most classically oriented works (such as the soft-winds Bach tribute Chorale) as triumphs in a treacherous territory in which short-changing jazz or dumbing-down symphonic composition is very hard to avoid. The Brubeck debate eventually vanished into the archives, and his real gifts – as a composer, and a charter of new rhythmic waters ... came to be appreciated for what they always were.

...Such generally perspicacious writers as the British critic Benny Green were merciless with Brubeck. But the band was a huge success all around the world, and toured constantly. The jazz-loving American comedian Mort Sahl once remarked of American cold-war foreign diplomacy that "After John Foster Dulles visits a country, the State Department sends the Brubeck Quartet in to repair the damage."
(2014) In this article about football player, Chris Snee, notice how the original publication (on the right) used the word *perspicacious*, and then it was later changed to *perceptive*. Discuss with your students the possible reasons for this editing decision and the impact on the reader.

One of Snee’s closest friends on the Giants was quarterback Eli Manning, who is far more *perspicacious* than his purposely bland public persona lets on. Manning, who has started 165 consecutive regular-season games, said every player fooled himself into thinking his career would carry on uninterrupted.

“We always tell each other, ‘Play each game like it’s your last because it might be,’” Manning said last week. “But I don’t know if we ever believe that. You think you’ll always be able to keep going. We all make a plan to play a certain number of years.”

“To keep my weight over 300 pounds, I basically had to eat something bad for me all the time,” Snee said. “I’d eat a double portion of dinner and then a huge bowl of ice cream. I’ve stopped that and the powerlifting workouts, too.”

But more than 150 N.F.L. games had taken their toll on Snee’s 315-pound body, a football creation painstakingly sculptured with marathon weightlifting sessions, timely medicinal restorations and intense, year-round training. Various body parts were now failing him, making a walk downstairs unpredictable and hazardous. Just sitting upright in a chair was sometimes an uncomfortable challenge.
I think we can all say that we prefer praise. I’d much rather be told that I was peerless and **perspicacious** than that I was a pathetic peripatetic.

But whether we get praise or censure, as social humans we receive a lot of social feedback. People are always telling us, either directly or indirectly, how we are 'doing' socially, and how we are perceived.

But getting that information, and what you do with it, are very different things indeed. And while we all like to think that we see our own good and bad points for what they are and take in criticism as well as praise….well, it turns out we’re a little biased in our own favor.

So to look at social feedback, the authors of this study had people meet each other in PERSON. On the first day, a group of five people who had never met before met in the lab to play an hour or so of Monopoly (hopefully if you’re only in the first hour you avoid a lot of the social rancor that I associate with my family’s Monopoly games).

After that game, participants were asked to rate three of the other people they played with (leaving one person unrated), on 40 positive and 40 negative personality traits, from 1 (this doesn’t apply to this person at all) to 8 (this always applies to this person). The traits ranged all over and included things like “lazy”, “intelligent”, “whiny”, “catty”, and “respectful”. All negative traits were REVERSE coded, so that in all cases a higher score was a better thing. So if you ranked a 7 for intelligent, that’s good, but if you ranked a 7 for whiny, it’s ALSO good, and meant you were LESS whiny. This makes the quick responses to a task easier.
Keep going! . . . There’s more!
Two security announcements went unnoticed this month, ones that have serious ramifications for anyone considering participating in, or linked to, life-threatening internet attacks. With little fanfare or fuss, on 3 May, life sentences for the most egregious digital crimes – ones that cause significant damage to people’s lives or national security – became a reality in the UK.

In the same week, Nigeria announced it had refreshed its cybercrime law, which is somewhat less vague in its wording: any attack on critical national infrastructure that causes a death will be punished by hanging (the secular form of capital punishment in the African nation).

Non-computer crime laws should also cover off any attacks that result in a catastrophe in the UK, as is the case in Nigeria. Is there really any need for additional laws to specify what tools were used to do the deed? Top digital cop in the UK, head of the National Cyber Crime Unit, Jamie Saunders, told FORBES these additions are designed to plug potential gaps in legislation. Lawmakers don’t want there to be any ambiguity or loophole for a hacker responsible for the loss of life, or whatever it is the law deems serious enough.

It might be perspicacious to trust Saunders on emerging threats too. After all, not only was he formerly director of international cyber policy at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and cyber policy lead in the British Embassy, Washington D.C., he started his career at GCHQ, the UK spy agency that is at the forefront of offensive digital tool development, also known as malware coding.
Google’s Larry Page has been talking about the 40 hour work week and how it might be about time that we abandoned it as the standard that we live by. His co-founder at Google, Sergey Brin, doesn’t think we’re quite there yet. And it’s certainly an attractive vision that we shouldn’t need to labor so many hours in order to make ends meet. But there’s a little secret about this that economists, with their secret decoder rings, already know and that they rarely tell the rest of us. Which is that working hours have been reducing for near two centuries now and it’s extremely likely that this is going to continue. Simply because as we get richer we generally decide to take some of that extra wealth as more leisure rather than the consumption of more goods or services.

Here’s the report about what Page actually said: “If you really think about the things that you need to make yourself happy—housing, security, opportunities for your kids—anthropologists have been identifying these things. It’s not that hard for us to provide those things,’ he said. ‘The amount of resources we need to do that, the amount of work that actually needs to go into that is pretty small. I’m guessing less than 1% at the moment. So the idea that everyone needs to work frantically to meet people’s needs is just not true.”

This is a subject that JM Keynes visited in his famous essay Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren. And while all sensible people have their doubts about “Keynesian Economics” there’s no doubt he was a most perspicacious economist. The essay looks at exactly this point: when will we actually be able to supply everyone’s needs with not all that much work? He thought it would be some 15 years or so from now and we’d all be working 15 hour weeks. Simply because productivity would have advanced so much that that’s all we would need to work. And this usually brings out the people shouting about why it hasn’t happened yet. But the thing is that is has happened, just not in quite the manner that everyone thought it would.

Want to read more? Click on the picture of Keynes to link to the full article.
My perspicacious colleague Charlotte Higgins likens the portrait to a poster for the Twilight vampire film franchise. What is really spooky is how characterless Kate looks,
sharing a corridor-like gallery with portraits of Germaine Greer, Salman Rushdie, Mo Mowlam and Anna Wintour. These people all have quirks, eccentricities, odd bodies and minds – and have been painted thus. The portrait of the duchess lacks even ordinary liveliness, let alone any mischief or youth or individuality, though these are evidenced, just around the corner, by Mario Testino's photographs of her.

There really is almost nothing to say about it as a painting. Were it a photograph, it would be the sort that hangs in a high street photographer's window as a testament to the wonders of digital improvement. It looks like a photograph of a painting, rather than a painting that aspires to the condition of the photograph. Compositively, it might be a passport picture, except smiling wouldn't be allowed. Had Velázquez painted the one visible earring he would have had fun rendering the highlights with little pips of impasto. If Rembrandt had approached the nose, he would have done something potatoey with it. No such luck.

"Wealth isn’t blind, he is perspicacious."
Plato