In an academic setting, it’s not enough for a student to say, for example, that the poet Maya Angelou uses a bird as a metaphor in many of her works. Students must provide evidence to support that kind of claim. Often, students must draw this evidence directly from the text(s) they are reading. The importance of this skill is reflected in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Beginning in Grade 6, for example, the standards for Reading (Literature and Informational Text; see RL.6.1 and RI.6.1) require students to cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

When you are ready to teach your students how to cite evidence from a text or review that skill, display the following page and discuss the information. Print out a copy and encourage students to refer to this reference.
Using Evidence-Based Terms

Your teacher asks you to describe one of the metaphors the poet Maya Angelou uses in her writing. You say, “She often uses a bird as a metaphor.” “Good,” your teacher responds. “What’s your evidence?” What your teacher wants you to do is provide evidence from the text(s) you are reading to support your answer. Here are some evidence-based terms that will guide you to cite textual evidence to support your ideas:

- Maya Angelou often uses a bird as a metaphor in her writing. **FOR EXAMPLE**, the title of her autobiography is *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The “caged bird” is a metaphor for her feeling of imprisonment by racism.

- The United States declared war on Japan **BECAUSE** Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

- This mathematics test is too difficult for young children. **THE AUTHOR STATED** that you would need to have taken advanced calculus to complete the problems.

- **ACCORDING TO THE TEXT**, biologists recognize the cell as the basic unit of life.

- You need to learn several important concepts in economics. **FOR INSTANCE**, understanding the relationship between supply and demand is a basic idea.

- **BASED ON THE READING**, I know that jazz is an American form of music.