

Claims, Reasons, & Evidence

PASSAGE I

Moderately priced restaurants, from Shake Shack to Cheesecake Factory, are losing their edge as diners seek out even cheaper alternatives, such as fast food. Price-conscious consumers are more likely to turn away from the so-called fast-casual and casual-dining segments of the restaurant industry they may have frequented in the past. "The burger guys, the pizza guys, the chicken category, the Mexican category — they're all on fire," said Nick Setyan, a senior vice president for Wedbush Securities. "You have positive growth in the restaurant industry but concentrated in quick-service restaurants." Instead of spending \$8 to \$20 for a meal in a nice restaurant, famished customers are seeking out fast-food counters where they will pay \$4 to \$8. Setyan says midpriced restaurants are under pressure because food prices are on the rise, but restaurants may not raise their prices. Instead, they are offering promotions. "In that environment, fast-casual loses" because they operate on such narrow profit margins. Additionally, unemployment is so low now — even in areas without a lot of minimum wage increases, such as Texas and Florida — chains are having a tough time finding people to hire. Though they have to pay staffers more, the restaurants are absorbing, rather than passing along to customers. Finally, with the increased popularity of food delivery, people tend to opt for local eateries, rather than chains.

1. What is the claim of this passage?
2. What is one of the reasons?
3. What evidence is used to support that reason?

PASSAGE II

Like using a smiley face in a work email? Think twice, a recent study suggests. Adding an emoji to an email increases perceptions that you're incompetent, according to a study in the journal *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. In one experiment, participants were asked to read emails and rate them based on warmth and competence. Some of the messages contained a smiley face. The results showed users who sent emails with smiley faces only saw a small rating increase in warmth, but a drop in competence. "Although smileys may help convey a positive tone in written messages, their adverse effects on first impressions of competence may outweigh these benefits," read an excerpt of the study. A separate experiment had participants read an email from a new employee to an unfamiliar administrative assistant. One was about a business meeting, while another was related to a social gathering. The study found participants rated the formal messages with smiley faces lower in competence than the emails with just text. In the case of the informal message, competence ratings were about the same.

1. What is the claim of this passage?
2. What is one of the reasons?
3. What evidence is used to support that reason?

PASSAGE III

Yes, go ahead and grab that cup of joe, or two, or more. Doing so may improve your health and help you live longer, suggests new research. In a new observational study involving close to 20,000 individuals, people who consumed at least four cups of coffee daily had a 64% lower risk of early death compared to those never or rarely consumed coffee. The reduction in risk was more significant once people reached the age of 45, suggesting that it may be even more beneficial to consume coffee as we get older. These findings echo the recent results of another large observational study, which found that coffee drinkers appear to live longer, regardless of whether they consume regular or decaf coffee. Coffee has also been shown to reduce the risk of many diseases, including type 2 diabetes, liver disease, colorectal cancer, Alzheimer's and skin cancer, too.

1. What is the claim of this passage?
2. What is one reason used to support that claim?
3. What evidence is used to support that reason?