**Understanding & Identifying Argument Paragraph Components**

**from “Is Junk Food Really Cheaper?” by Mark Bitman *The New York Times* September 24, 2011**

The “fact” that junk food is cheaper than real food has become a way we explain why so many Americans are overweight, particularly those with lower incomes. This is just plain wrong. I frequently read confident statements like, “when a bag of chips is cheaper than a head of broccoli...” or “it’s more affordable to feed a family of four at McDonald’s than to cook a healthy meal for them at home.” In fact it isn’t cheaper to eat highly processed food: a typical order for a family of four — for example, two Big Macs, a cheeseburger, six chicken McNuggets, two medium and two small fries, and two medium and two small sodas — costs, at the McDonald’s a hundred steps from where I write, about $28. In general, despite extensive government subsidies, hyperprocessed\* food remains more expensive than food cooked at home. You can serve a roasted chicken with vegetables along with a simple salad and milk for about $14, and feed four or even six people. If that’s too much money, substitute a meal of rice and canned beans with bacon, green peppers and onions; it’s easily enough for four people and costs about $9.

**Hyperprocessed**- extremely processed so that all the natural vitamins are sucked out of the food. Chicken McNuggets are an example. Chicken parts are chopped up and smushed together, then breaded and fried to form the nuggets.

1. Why did the writer put the word “fact” in quotations in the first sentence of the paragraph?

2. Summarize the paragraph’s **debatable claim** in your own words.

3. Is the argument **persuasive**? Were you persuaded to agree with the writer? Why or why not?

4. Does the writer provide enough **evidence** to prove the claim? (Underline the evidence.)

5. What other evidence would make this an even more persuasive paragraph?

6. Does the writer provide **commentary** that explains the evidence, why it’s important and how it proves the claim? (Put a star next to each commentary sentence.)

7. What method of **organization** does this paragraph use?

8. **Challenge**: explain why the paragraph is organized in this way. How does this organization support the argument?

9. **Challenge:** How else could the sentences have been arranged? How would this rearranging change or affect the argument?