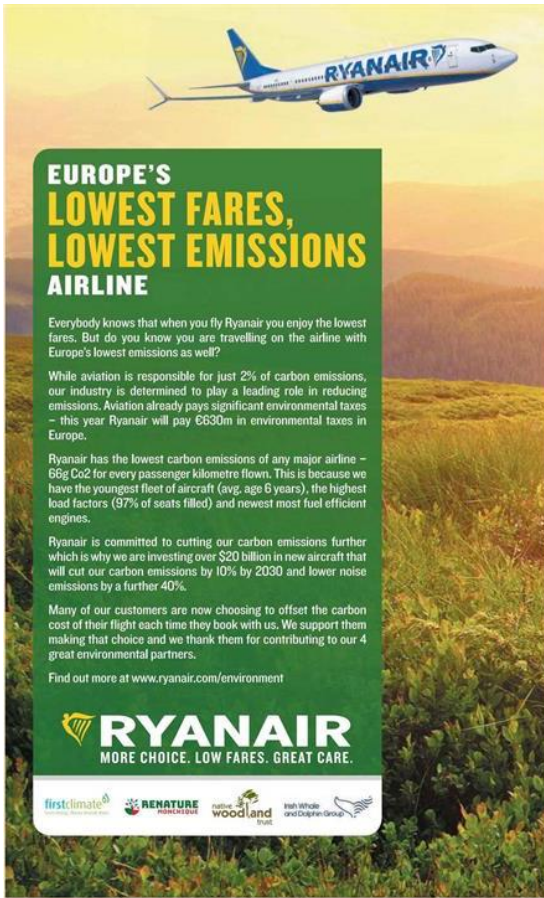




# Greenwashing



**Exercise 1: Look at the pictures below. Discuss what they have in common.**



**Exercise 2: Write three words that come to your mind when you hear the phrase 'environmentally friendly'. Read the text below and check if your words appeared.**

.....

## Why do companies want to appear more eco-friendly?

As climate change has become a big topic around the world, shops and businesses want to show us that they think about it too.

That's why when we walk into shops or go online you might see lots of signs about things being 'eco-friendly', 'organic' or 'sustainable'.

It's great to know that companies are trying to be more environmentally friendly but unfortunately sometimes these signs and slogans aren't always truthful, and they can be used to hide a bigger problem with the way some businesses are run.

While these labels might be true in some cases, sometimes they are deliberately not telling the full story to try and trick customers into thinking they are making an eco-friendly choice.



# Greenwashing



**Exercise 3: What is greenwashing? Discuss your answers and read the paragraph below to check if your predictions were correct.**

## What is greenwashing?

Greenwashing is a type of marketing. It is a way to make products more appealing to customers who care about the environment.

When companies do things that are harmful to the environment while saying they care about climate change, this is called 'greenwashing'.

The International Consumer Protection Enforcement Network recently analysed 500 websites and found that up to 40% of environmentally friendly claims might be misleading customers.

**Exercise 4: Look at the three boxes below. Can you spot five signs of greenwashing?**



**Exercise 5: Match five signs of greenwashing with their descriptions.**

- a. Promises to carbon offset or donate to environmentally friendly causes
- b. Buzzwords
- c. Green packaging
- d. Not fully recyclable
- e. No proof

.....

One of the biggest signs that a product is greenwashed is if its labels or its packaging are green, and the rest of the company's products come in a different style of packaging. Colours send powerful messages to customers, we often associate feelings with colours. Lots of people associate the colour green with nature, which often gives products the impression that they are environmentally friendly.



# Greenwashing



.....

Lots of companies are working hard to make their packaging recyclable. But if it is only partly recyclable it's still not sustainable and it shows that the company is not completely invested in protecting the environment. It can also make it harder for you to recycle responsibly. Sometimes companies might also claim their products are made of partly recycled plastic, but that doesn't mean it's sustainable packaging.

.....

When it's not clear when a product has been greenwashed just from its packaging or advertising, you need to go and find the evidence! Some packaging and labels come with clear certifications which show that they are telling the truth about their environmentally friendly practices, but lots don't. Go to the company's website to find out more, and if you can't see anything there, drop them a message.

.....

If you're seeing words like 'sustainable', 'natural' or 'organic' - this can be a sign that it's greenwashed. Sometimes what they're describing is only partly sustainable or organic, and the company is over-promoting these parts of the product. If you're not sure, check the ingredients label or if it's an item of clothing, see what materials it's made out of.

.....

Companies may try to appear more environmentally friendly by offering to donate part of their profits to causes like carbon offsetting. If you see that a company is saying it donates to carbon offsetting or a similar cause, like planting more trees, it's a good idea to research more about what these projects involve.

**Exercise 6: Identify signs of greenwashing in the real-life examples below. More than one answer is available.**

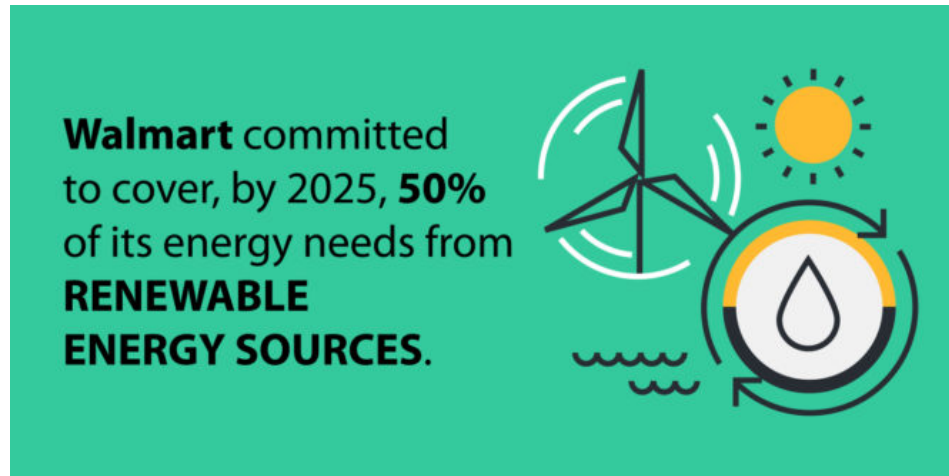
**Diesel has really cleaned up its act.**

Find out how clean diesel technology impacts fuel efficiency and performance, while also being a more eco-conscious choice.





# Greenwashing



**Exercise 7: Discuss why greenwashing may be a problem. Read the text below and check the answer.**

## Why is greenwashing a problem?

When greenwashing happens, a person might buy a product or do an activity thinking they're doing something positive for the environment when actually they're not. In some cases, it could be (1) d..... the environment more without the public realising.

Sometimes this can be done (2) u..... - the company might be focusing on one issue that is helping but not looking at the bigger picture and (3) w..... u..... the harm it might be doing to the environment at the same time.

But sometimes it can be (4) d..... - companies making their advertising or product names suggest that they're helping the environment even though they're not.

And further to this, it can create (5) d..... in a company.

**Exercise 8: Read the definitions and complete the text with the missing words.**

- (1) causing harm
- (2) not on purpose
- (3) to think carefully about the advantages or disadvantages of a situation before making a decision
- (4) intentional or planned
- (5) the feeling that someone or something cannot be relied upon

**Exercise 9: Discuss what you can do to avoid greenwashing.**



# Greenwashing



**Exercise 10: Match the certifications with their purposes.**



1. Leaping Bunny



2. Fairtrade



3. Forest  
Stewardship  
Council



4. Carbon Trust



5. B Corp

- the product has been made by people who received a fair wage for their work.
- meets a certain standard of carbon emission reduction, meaning the product is trying to minimise its carbon impact.
- the product has not been tested on animals.
- a business is legally required to do beneficial things for the environment and the people who help create their products.
- the product is made using sustainable or responsibly managed wood sources.

**Exercise 11: Discuss the questions.**

- Do you agree or disagree with the examples of greenwashing discussed in the articles? Why?
- Do you know any other examples of greenwashing?
- What influences companies to greenwash their products?
- Do you buy products based on their degree of greenness?
- Do you consider yourself green?

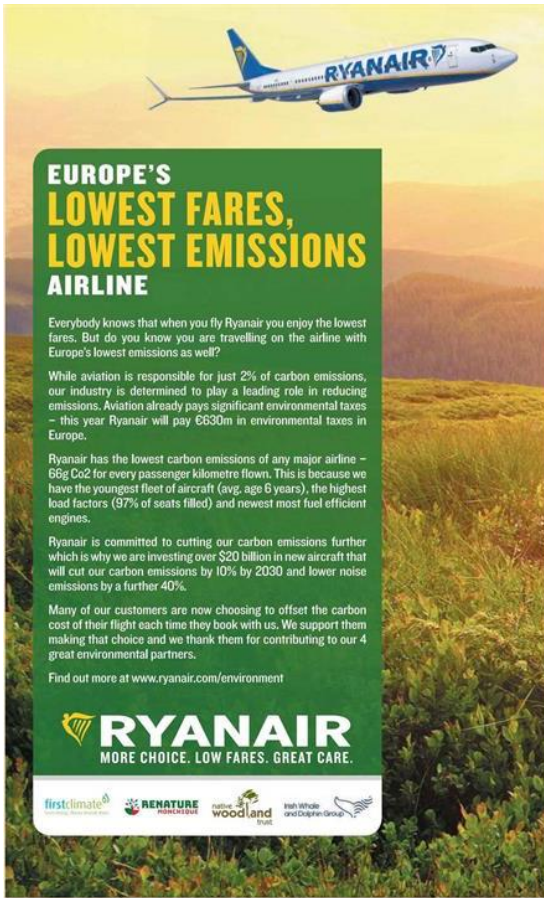


# Greenwashing

## ANSWERS



**Exercise 1: Look at the pictures below. Discuss what they have in common.**



**Exercise 2: Write three words that come to your mind when you hear the phrase 'environmentally friendly'. Read the text below and check if your words appeared. (Suggested answers)**

organic

eco-friendly

sustainable

### Why do companies want to appear more eco-friendly?

As climate change has become a big topic around the world, shops and businesses want to show us that they think about it too.

That's why when we walk into shops or go online you might see lots of signs about things being 'eco-friendly', 'organic' or 'sustainable'.

It's great to know that companies are trying to be more environmentally friendly but unfortunately sometimes these signs and slogans aren't always truthful, and they can be used to hide a bigger problem with the way some businesses are run.

While these labels might be true in some cases, sometimes they are deliberately not telling the full story to try and trick customers into thinking they are making an eco-friendly choice.



# Greenwashing

## ANSWERS



**Exercise 3: What is greenwashing? Discuss your answers and read the paragraph below to check if your predictions were correct.**

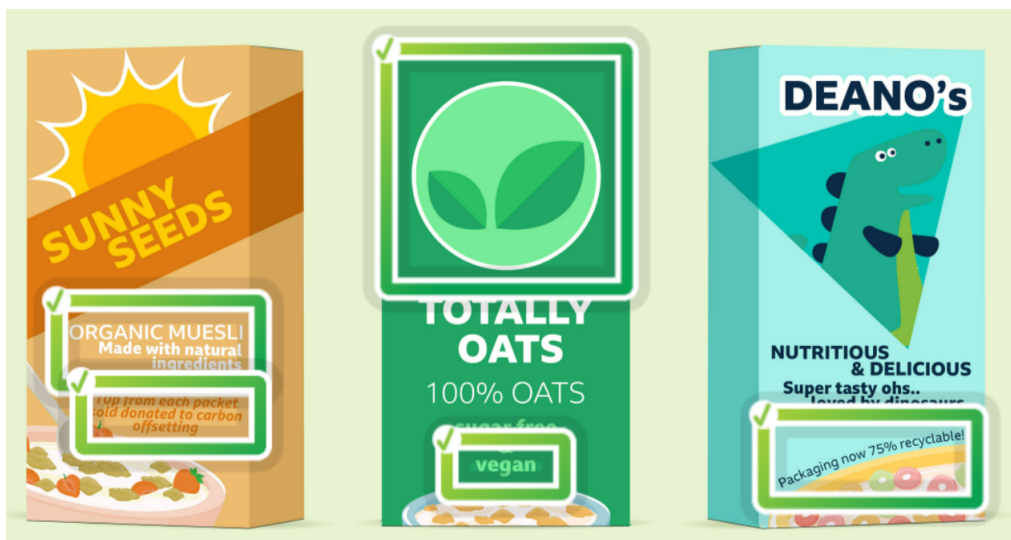
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### Green packaging

One of the biggest signs that a product is greenwashed is if its labels or its packaging are green, and the rest of the company's products come in a different style of packaging. Colours send powerful messages to customers, we often associate feelings with colours. Lots of people associate the colour green with nature, which often gives products the impression that they are environmentally friendly.



# Greenwashing

## ANSWERS



### Not fully recyclable

---

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### No proof

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---

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### Promises to carbon offset or donate to environmentally friendly causes

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## Exercise 6: Identify signs of greenwashing in the real-life examples below. More than one answer is available.

### Diesel has really cleaned up its act.

Find out how clean diesel technology impacts fuel efficiency and performance, while also being a more eco-conscious choice.



Buzzwords: eco-conscious  
No proof

Buzzwords: compostable  
No proof / Not recyclable?  
Green packaging





# Greenwashing

## ANSWERS



Buzzwords: non-toxic  
No proof / Not recyclable  
Green packaging

Buzzwords: renewable  
Promises

**Walmart committed to cover, by 2025, 50% of its energy needs from RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES.**

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# Greenwashing

## ANSWERS



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- b. meets a certain standard of carbon emission reduction, meaning the product is trying to minimise its carbon impact. 3
- c. the product has not been tested on animals. 1
- d. a business is legally required to do beneficial things for the environment and the people who help create their products. 5
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