Who is Greenwashing?

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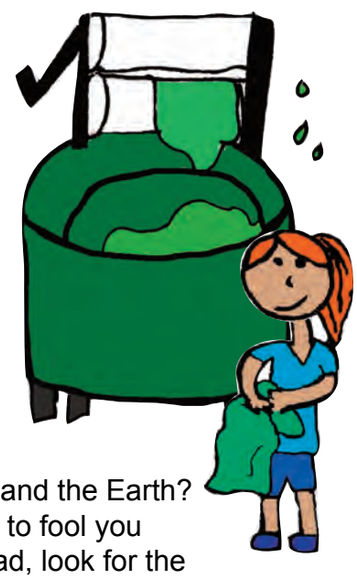
If a product is good for the Earth, it is "green."Greenwashing is when a company promotes that it's product and the way it is made is good for the Earth, but it's not! They advertise their product is Earth-friendly but the real truth is they are harming the Earth. They are

"stretching the truth."

How do I know if a company is really green or pretending to be green?



Question 1: Bottled water is often sold as a green product, but is it really green? Bottled water creates tons of trash that fills landfills and oceans. Trucks ship bottled water to stores, creating more trash and using too much energy. Even recycling water bottles causes unnecessary industrial pollution. Many bottled water companies try to look green by donating to environmental organizations or advertising that their water is "natural" or pure. Think about it. We can drink water from our own faucets. We don't need to buy it. If you are worried about tap water at home or school, have it tested. You can filter it too. Use one water bottle that can be refilled many times. Bottled water may be necessary in emergencies, but only temporarily. **Answer: No. Bottled water is NOT a green product.**

Question 2: Does the word "natural" on a product label mean that it is healthy for you and the Earth? Using the word natural is often another form of greenwashing. Some companies want to fool you into thinking their product is organically grown when they use the word "natural." Instead, look for the words Certified Organic or USDA Organic on the label. These mean food grown in ways which protect you and the Earth. No pesticides are used. **Answer: The word "natural" on products does NOT mean organically grown or healthy.**

Question 3: How can I learn about organic labeling? Green labeling can be very confusing. Even so, be sure to try to read the ingredient labels on all products. **Answer: This link will help you learn about what labels to look for. Click here.**

Question 4: What government agency is working on Green Guides to help us sort out green advertising claims? Can I write to the agency to ask them questions? **Answer**: **Yes, please write to the Federal Trades Commission www.ftc.gov to ask them questions.**

Question 5: What are some commonly "greenwashed" products? Become an "Earth Inspector" and check out the products that you use to see if the companies that produce them are greenwashing. **Answer**: **Here are a few to "google" online. Cleaning products, garden and lawn care businesses, oil, coal, textile, natural gas, and cosmetic companies.** Try working in groups to come up with your answers. These three web sites can help you learn more. You many need adults to work with you on this project. **www.ewg.org , and www.Clean-ingforHealthySchools.org**

Buying green is really important so take time to understand what you are buying. Greenwashers can be sneaky. Buy from companies that are trustworthy. Click here to print out postcards to send to companies that greenwash or businesses that sell greenwashed products.