



# GUARDIANS OF TRUTH: EMPOWERING YOUTH AGAINST GREENWASHING

✳ [HTTPS://GREENWASHING.WATCH/](https://greenwashing.watch/)

✳ @KA210 GUARDIANS OF TRUTH



It is an educational toolkit that helps young people and youth workers understand, identify, and challenge greenwashing through critical thinking, media literacy, and practical verification tools. Combining clear theory with interactive activities, it empowers participants to become more informed consumers and active communicators for honest, evidence-based sustainability.

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## Introduction: What is this toolkit all about?



In a world full of “eco,” “green,” and “sustainable” messages, it is becoming harder to tell which environmental claims are genuine and which are misleading. The Guardians of Truth toolkit was created to help young people and youth workers better understand greenwashing and build the skills needed to challenge it. It combines accessible theory with practical activities that support media literacy, fact-checking, critical thinking, and honest communication. Rather than only explaining the problem, the toolkit encourages participants to become active, informed consumers and changemakers in their communities.

The toolkit is structured around several learning themes: understanding the concept and types of greenwashing, identifying misleading claims in sectors such as fashion, food, energy, and cosmetics, exploring the role of education and critical thinking, and examining how sustainability messages are received differently in urban and rural contexts. Across the toolkit, participants are guided not only to detect misleading communication, but also to create more transparent and evidence-based alternatives.

### OUR SLOGAN:

**Guardians**  
of TRUTH

See Through the Green. Spot It. Stop It. Suddenly you are not buying it anymore. Green Claims. Real Checks

## Why greenwashing matters more than ever ?

Greenwashing is the practice of making a product, service, or company appear more environmentally responsible than it actually is. This can happen through vague language, selective data, false labels, or nature-inspired branding that creates a “green” impression without real evidence behind it. The toolkit explains that greenwashing matters because it undermines trust, slows real climate action, and makes it harder for genuinely sustainable businesses to stand out.

Young people are especially exposed. Social media platforms reward short, visual, emotional content, while sponsored posts and influencer marketing often blur the line between information and advertising. Without the right tools to question what they see, many young consumers may mistake attractive branding for real sustainability. This is why the toolkit places such a strong emphasis on media literacy and green-claim verification as essential skills for today’s youth.

### Learning by doing – from detecting greenwashing to creating honest messages



A major strength of the toolkit is its activity-based approach. Instead of relying only on theory, it offers participatory exercises that allow young people to analyse real claims, research certifications, rewrite misleading messages,

and develop their own honest campaigns. Activities such as Seven Sins Detective and Claim Verification Lab help participants work in teams, research evidence, and test how environmental claims stand up to scrutiny.

Another standout activity, Design an Honest Ad, asks participants to create alternative communications that are persuasive but transparent. Rather than simply criticising brands, young people learn how to communicate responsibly themselves – using clear wording, evidence, and realistic claims. This shifts the focus from passive awareness to active participation and gives participants the confidence to produce better public messages in their own schools, communities, and online spaces.

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### A simple checklist for spotting misleading green claims

One of the most practical parts of the toolkit is its verification checklist for environmental claims. It gives young people and educators a clear method for checking whether a claim is trustworthy. The checklist encourages users to ask for proof, check the full scope and lifecycle of the product, verify certifications, analyse whether the language is vague or specific, and compare the claim within the wider product category. This turns greenwashing from a vague concept into something participants can actively investigate.

The toolkit also introduces the well-known “Seven Sins of Greenwashing,” including tactics such as vagueness, hidden trade-offs, no proof, irrelevance, fibbing, and false labels. These categories are especially useful because they help participants classify what kind of manipulation they are seeing in ads, packaging, and online posts. In this way, the toolkit does not just warn young people about greenwashing – it equips them with a language and structure for understanding it.