Despite the recession, many consumers continue to spend a little extra on environmentally-friendly products. Purchases like organic food and nontoxic household cleaners help consumers feel empowered, healthy, and guilt free.

This relatively new behavior has some big corporations in a tizzy (1). Putting authentically nontoxic products on the market takes a lot of time and money. Those factors don’t cozy up (2) with short-term gains, so many big companies are turning to greenwashing for a quick fix (3).

We dug up (4) 25 of the products most prone to greenwashing attempts. If you see these “green” products on the shelves, take heed (5). That green tint may have more to do with dollars than chlorophyll.

Soft drink production uses an enormous amount of water, and leaves behind tons of waste. Coca-Cola knows this. Its new “going-green” features stylish green cans and highlights the company’s water conservation efforts. Coca Cola has partnered with WWF to preserve seven of the world’s major rivers. It is also helping conservation projects in water-stressed areas (6) throughout the world.

It takes about 2.5 liters of water to produce just one liter of product at Coke’s bottling plants. Coca-Cola sells 1.5 billion beverages a day in over 200 countries. In 2006, Coca-Cola and its bottlers used 80 billion gallons (290 billion liters) of water to produce beverages — equivalent to one-fifth of the daily water usage of the U.S. Approximately 40% of that went into producing their popular drinks like Coke, Sprite and Fanta, while the other 60% was consumed by the firm’s supply chain and the production of ingredients, including the water-intensive process of growing sugar and corn for corn syrup.

(1) In a tizzy: in a state of confusion
(2) Cozy up: be friendly to someone in the hope of getting an advantage / or here: be fully compatible with
(3) Quick fix: an easy but temporary solution to the problem
(4) Dig up: discover forgotten facts by searching very carefully
(5) Take heed: consider this, pay attention
(6) Water-stressed areas: areas that suffer from a lack of water

WORKSHEET

1) Analyse the document

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of document</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Date of document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author/creator of the document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Target audience</td>
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2) Answer the following questions:

a) Define the word “greenwashing”

b) Why can we say that Coca Cola practises “greenwashing”? 