

Gimme some green

Level: Advanced (C1-C2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Overview: This article discusses the need to reshape markets, and not just companies, in the effort to go greener.

Business topics: Corporate sustainability, climate crisis, green-minded leaders, green business strategies

Business language: Useful business vocabulary and phrases, sustainability

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, how to spot greenwashing, evaluating good practices, sustainability certifications, reporting findings

Groups: Whole class, one-to-one, small groups

1. Warmer

- a. Ask students to answer the questions with a partner. Monitor and write any useful vocabulary on the board. Have students to share their thoughts and ideas with the rest of the group.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the task. Have students scan the article to find the words used in context. Elicit anything else they know about each word.

Key:

1. *overdue*
2. *tipping point*
3. *upend*
4. *status quo*
5. *pledge*
6. *mushroom*
7. *lobby*

8. *sweeping*
9. *slew*
10. *backtrack*
11. *discretionary*
12. *strident*
13. *dismayed*
14. *rolling back*

3. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to read the questions and find the answers in the text. Encourage them to identify key words in each statement and to scan the text to find the relevant section.

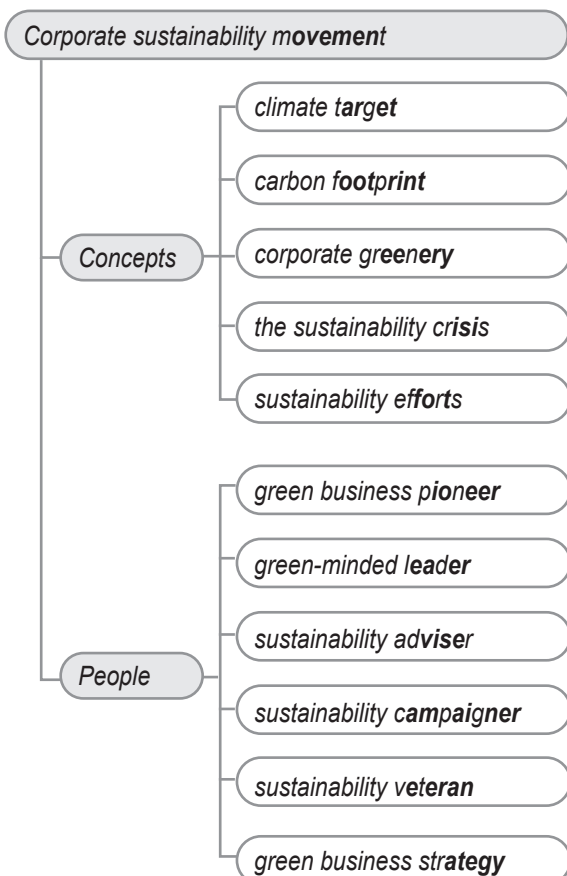
Key:

1. *They're calling for a rethink of sustainability measures and green business strategies.*
2. *We should question the founding ideas and dominant approaches in the corporate sustainability movement.*
3. *By giving a false impression of progress that is delaying 'required radical changes to markets and the policies that frame them'.*
4. *According to them, we really need sweeping, long-term rules that reshape entire markets.*
5. *Shell: climate targets; Volvo: delayed deadline for selling fully electric cars.*
6. *No longer from individual business leaders (implying we need systems).*
7. *It refers to reporting that measures social, environmental and financial performance.*
8. *Previously, Unilever was known for great sustainability efforts. Now, they are rolling back targets on plastic use and recycling.*
9. *He was famous for his sustainability efforts and not pleasing investors. He said 'don't put your money in our company' to those who disapproved.*
10. *He thinks they should set tougher standards.*

4. Business language – sustainability

- a. Ask students to first try to complete the phrases before they check their answers in the text.

Key:



- b. Students use the phrases from task a in their own sentences. Encourage students to peer edit and provide as much feedback as possible.

Key:

Possible answers:

1. *A sustainability adviser can help you identify the most appropriate green business strategies to help you meet your sustainability targets.*
2. *She has been shortlisted for the green-minded leaders award that recognises people who are working hard to reduce their organisation's greenhouse gas emissions.*

3. *After five decades working in climate activism, he is what you would call a sustainability veteran.*
4. *I'm cycling to work to try and reduce my personal carbon footprint.*
5. *Anita Roddick was a green business pioneer who founded the Body Shop, an eco-friendly cosmetics company in 1976.*
6. *Sometimes I wonder if our sustainability efforts will be enough to confront the sustainability crisis.*

5. Discussion

- a. Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together, so they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

6. Wider business theme – greenwashing

- a. Allow students to read the tips and discuss them with a partner. Then ask students to continue working in pairs and to choose a company they want to learn more about. They then follow the tips to analyse the company's level of greenness.

Regroup pairs into larger groups of six and allow them all to share their findings and discuss the questions. If there is time, regroup pairs again, so they can share their findings with other students. Have students share any surprising findings and highlight their main takeaways with the whole class.

The extension is optional and can be done in class or for homework. After students have explored one or two certification websites, ask them to share their opinions.