

Copper is extracted from several ores, the main one being chalcopyrite, which is composed of sulphur (35%), copper (34.5%) and iron (30.5%). To extract copper from chalcopyrite, it must be separated from the other elements in the ore. Between 1700 and 1950, this was done in three steps, which took place in smelters often located close to the mines. Large quantities of processing slag can still be found here today.

Step 1

After being sorted and crushed, the mined material is roasted in a fire to remove the sulphur and transform it into gas. Then, the ore is smelted in a coal furnace between 900 and 1200°C. The first matte, containing about 30% copper, is thus extracted. The slag, still rich in copper, is then crushed, roasted and smelted again to recover further matte.









the same characteristics.

