

Copper Fast Facts

Copper is:

- An element with the chemical symbol Cu (from the Roman word Cuprum - their word for the island of Cyprus, famous for its copper mines).
- Deep pink-brown in colour and is the only metal other than gold, to have a distinctive colour.
- An excellent conductor of heat and electricity (second only to silver).
- Soft but tough.
- Malleable and ductile (can be beaten and drawn into a wire).
- Alloyed (mixed) with many other metals.
- Used in electric generators, household/car electrical wiring, wires in appliances, computers, lights, motors, telephone cables, radios and TV sets.
- Used in water pipes and hydraulic systems.
- Used to make 'silver' coins such as our 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent pieces. \$1 and \$2 coins are 92% copper, mixed with aluminium and nickel.
- Useful for car radiators, air conditioners, home heating systems, cooking pots and boilers to produce steam.
- Used as copper sulphate used to kill algal blooms in water reservoirs, protect timber, prevents plant roots from blocking rains and sewerage systems and controls insect infestations.



Copper – Image courtesy of Xstrata Copper

For more information on copper see [Geoscience Australia Mines Atlas](#).

