

Extracting Metals

Chemistry

The method depends on reactivity, and on nothing else.

Extraction method by position in the reactivity series.

Metal	Method
K, Na, Ca, Mg, Al	Electrolysis of molten ore
Zn, Fe, Sn, Pb	Reduction with carbon
Cu	Reduction, then electrolytic refining
Ag, Au, Pt	Found native; physical separation

Aluminium requires electrolysis and cryolite to lower the melting point of alumina from 2072°C to around 950°C.