



The Merchant of Venice Understanding Symbolism

1. Define *symbolism*:
2. Identify an example of symbolism in *The Merchant of Venice*. Underline the object that is the symbol.

Cite the text ()

3. How did you identify this object as a symbol?
4. What is the literal meaning of the object? What is its abstract meaning?

Characteristics	Gold Casket	Silver Casket	Lead Casket
Description	Gold represents luxury and wealth.		
Inscription	“Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.” (No Fear: 2.7.6)		
What's inside?			
Symbolism			

Answer Key

Location of Lines

Characteristics	Gold Casket	Silver Casket	Lead Casket
Inscription	“Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.” (No Fear: 2.7.6)	“Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.” (No Fear: 2.7.8)	“Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.” (No Fear: 2.7.10)
What's inside?	A skull; “All that glisters is not gold; / Often have you heard that told. / Many a man his life hath sold / But my outside to behold.” (No Fear: 2.7.69–72).	A picture of an idiot; “There be fools alive iwis, / Silvered o’er—and so was this.” (No Fear: 2.9.68–69)	A picture of Portia; “You that choose not by the view, / Chance as fair, and choose as true,” (No Fear: 3.2.135–136)