

Tip #1 – Use What Is There

As an annotator, you do not have to reinvent the wheel – provided the text you want to work on has been annotated before. **Previous editions** can provide you with suggestions for research and draw your attention to items you would never have thought in need of annotation. However, these editions must not constrain you – you should always feel free to annotate something they did not or to look at things from a new perspective.

Thus, you could proceed as follows:

1. Scrutinise an **unedited version** of the text and mark the items that you think in need of annotation.
2. Think about the information you will have to provide in order for your readers to understand the text. Write down your **thoughts and questions**.
3. Search for all the **critical editions** of the text you want to annotate.
4. **Compare** their annotations to your notes:
 - a. Do they annotate all the items you think in need of annotation?
 - b. Do they explain passages or words that seem obvious to you?
 - c. Do you agree with all of their explanations?
 - d. Do different editions disagree about certain questions? Which of them seems most convincing to you?

Now, you have a better idea of what you will have to annotate.

5. Before beginning your **research**, you should look at the sources used by previous editors. This will save you a lot of time. However, you should always check whether their sources are reliable and search for other sources, as well.
 6. When **writing** your own annotation, you should always keep in mind the annotations by previous editors:
 - a. If you base your annotation on one of theirs, cite the respective editor.
 - b. If you disagree with a previous annotation you should include a brief discussion of it in your own annotation.
- On a final note: Editors are not infallible - do not hesitate to improve on previous annotations, to point out inaccuracies, or to introduce a new perspective on things.