

# Literature Reviews with NVivo

NVivo can be used in a different way for Literature Reviews. Instead of the focus being on coding documents (i.e. the research articles themselves), it is more efficient to **code your own notes** on those documents.

It can also be beneficial to import the research documents into the NVivo Project so you can also use NVivo to help you search for relevant content. You can use NVivo to **import your PDF documents** and use NVivo to **search** within them, and to **code good examples, quotes** etc. so that you can find them more easily when you need them.

For the Review itself, I have found that the most efficient approach is to **create Notes for each document** (linked to the relevant documents for easy reference), and **code sections of these notes to Nodes** for your Literature Review. This is a better approach than directly coding sections of the actual articles, because when you open the Node, it essentially collates what you have already written in notes and all you need to do is clean them up for your review.

## *Creating Notes in NVivo*

### OPTION 1: Create Notes as Memos

To Create a Note as a **Memo** for each PDF document you import as an **Internal File**:

- Right-click on the document and select **Memo Link --> Link to New Memo**.
- Give the Memo a name which identifies it as belonging to that document (e.g., "Abbott (2006)"). This will make it easier to see which note belongs to which article when you open a **Node** (it will be written as Memos/Abbot (2006) in the blue hyperlink above the quote).
- Then just type your notes into this Memo for the article in question.
- When you've finished your notes, code the information to the relevant Node(s) for your Literature Review.
- You will find all your Memos in the Sources Area, in the Memos Folder.

## OPTION 2: Create Notes as External Documents

To Create a Note as a **Document** associated with each document you import as an **External File**:

- Right-click in the list view of the **Externals** File Area and select **New External**.
- Give the new **Link** a name which identifies it as belonging to that document (e.g., “Abbott (2006)”).
- Click on the **External** tab, and select the File Type (e.g., File Link) and File Path to the document to create a link to that File on your computer. Optionally you can enter a **Location Description** and define the **Contents**.
- On the **Attribute Values** tab you can give the document a **File Classification**. Then Click **OK**.
- This will automatically create a new text document associated with your file, in which to write and code your notes.

## OPTION 3: Create Notes as a New Document

To Create a Note as a standalone **Document** not associated with a **File**:

- Right-click in the list view of the Files Area and select **New Document → New Document**.
- Give the new **File** a name which identifies it as belonging to that document (e.g., “Abbott (2006)”).
- You can also give it an optional **File Classification** (e.g., *Journal Article*) on the **Attribute Values** tab. Click **OK**.
- This will create a new text document in which to write and code your notes.

## *Example Nodes for a Literature Review*

Define the scope of your research **first**. This will allow you to target exactly what you need to research.

Example of Nodes you might want to create for your Review:

1. Introduction/Background
  - a. What is the scope of the research? (Definition)
  - b. What will not be covered and why
2. Previous Research
  - a. Evidence
  - b. Conclusions
  - c. Chronology (e.g., 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> centuries)
  - d. Relevant Themes
  - e. Methodologies
  - f. Theories
  - g. Philosophies/Schools of Thought
  - h. Definitions
  - i. Standards
3. Conclusion/Recommendations
  - a. Gaps in Research
  - b. Questions for further research

And you can create **Child Nodes** for the different elements under each **Parent Node**.