

## Purpose

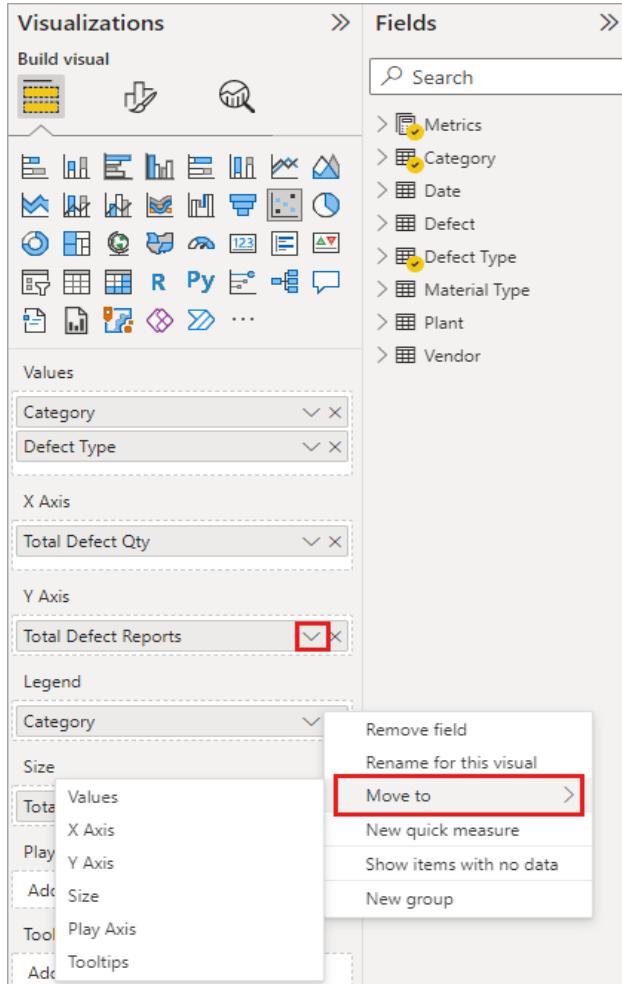
When you build a report with Power BI (Desktop or Service), designing it should be oriented around its usability for everyone — regardless of vision, color perception, physical limitations, or assistive-technology use. The goal with this guide is to create a single report that works broadly, rather than duplicating or creating special “accessible only” versions.

### 1. Built-In Accessibility Features

These are features that work “out of the box,” giving baseline accessibility whether or not you make additional accommodations.

- **Keyboard navigation** — Users can navigate visuals, slicers, filters, and pages using keyboard alone. Focus is highlighted so users know where they are.
- **Screen-reader support** — Visuals that are keyboard-navigable are also readable by screen readers. When a visual gains focus, the title, visual type, and alt text (if provided) are announced.
- **High-contrast mode support** — If a user enables a high-contrast theme in Windows, Power BI automatically respects those settings in Desktop; and when published, the high-contrast palette carries over.
- **Focus mode** — Allows a visual to be expanded (full screen), which can help with readability or magnification.
- **Show Data / Data Table view** — Users can switch to a tabular representation of the chart data (keyboard + screen-reader friendly), which is often easier to consume than graphical visuals.

**Tip:** To make report creation more accessible for screen reader users, a dedicated context menu is available. This menu lets you reorder fields within a well by moving them up or down in the Fields list. You can also use it to transfer a field to a different well—such as Legend, Values, or other supported locations. (See figure below)

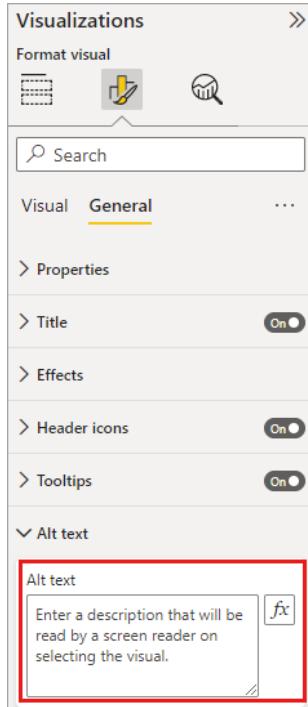


## 2. Accessibility Features You Should Configure

As a report author, you need to make intentional design choices so the report can deliver meaningful accessibility.

### Alt Text for Visuals and Objects

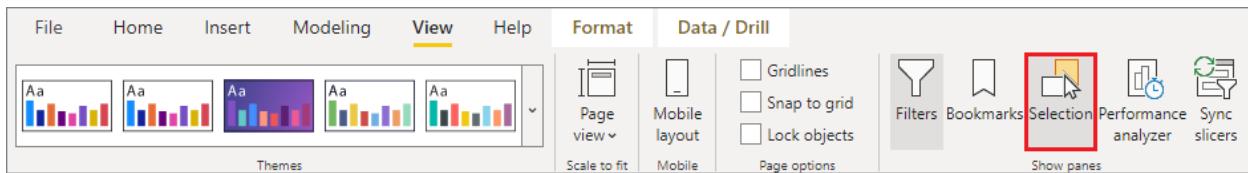
- Provide alt text for **all non-decorative visuals, images, shapes, and textboxes**. (See figure below)

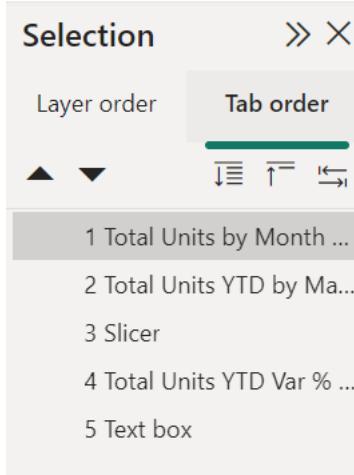


- Alt text should describe **what the visual means / conveys**, not replicate raw data values (because data may change). E.g., describe the insight or purpose rather than listing every number.
- To add alt text: select the object → Format pane → General → Alt Text (capacity: 250 characters).
- Optionally: use **dynamic / conditional alt text** via DAX or conditional formatting – so alt text updates to reflect current data values when the report changes.

### Logical Tab Order (Keyboard Navigation Order)

- Set a sensible tab order so keyboard users move through visuals in a logical sequence (e.g. top-left → right → down).
- Use the **Selection Pane** (View → Selection) → then “Tab order” to reorder elements. (See figure below)





- Mark purely decorative items (shapes, images) as **hidden from tab order**, so they don't disrupt navigation flow.

As users move through a report, a visible focus indicator appears to show their current position on the page. The exact appearance of this focus indicator can vary depending on the browser being used. (See figure below)

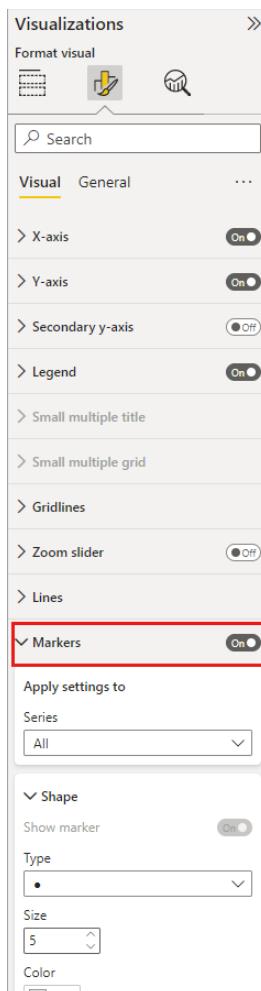
Sales Amounts in USD By Sales Size and Country						
Sale Size	Australia	Canada	France	Germany	Great Britain	United States
Medium	\$1,048,778	\$633,615	\$562,440	\$563,577	\$638,771	\$2,742,435
Large	\$411,848	\$259,435	\$184,870	\$236,386	\$311,476	\$1,469,345
Small	\$439,692	\$303,378	\$222,373	\$209,545	\$267,717	\$1,258,814
Total	\$1,900,318	\$1,196,429	\$969,683	\$1,009,508	\$1,217,964	\$5,470,593

#### Clear Titles, Axis Labels, Legends, Data Labels

- Every visual and page should have a clear, descriptive title. Avoid internal-only acronyms or jargon if the audience is broad.
- Ensure axes, legends, and data series are properly labeled. If using charts, enable data labels when appropriate for clarity.
- For complex visuals (e.g. line charts with multiple series), ensure each series is clearly distinguished (not just by color).

#### Avoid Relying Only on Color – Use Markers / Patterns

- Do not use color alone to differentiate series or data categories — combine with markers, shapes, patterns, or data labels.
- For line, area, scatter, bubble charts: turn on **markers** (Shape/Format pane → Shapes → Show Markers) and customize per series (shape, size, color) for better distinction. (See figure below)

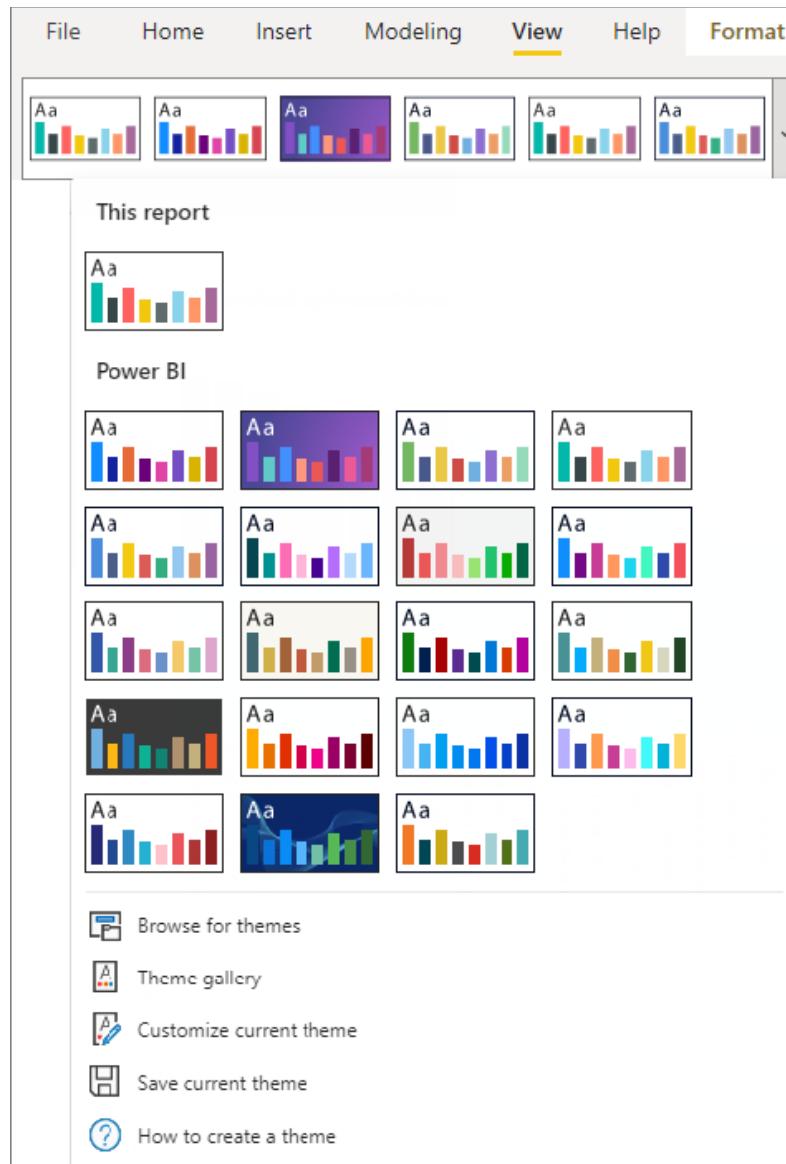


- But avoid over-cluttering visuals — too many markers, labels or patterns can reduce readability. Use a “squint test.”

### Use Accessible Themes, Colors & Contrast

- Ensure sufficient contrast between text/data and background. Aim for contrast ratios that meet accessibility guidelines (e.g. per WCAG).

- Test for color-blind friendliness: avoid problematic color combinations (e.g. green/red, green/brown, blue/purple, light-green/yellow, blue/grey, etc.).
- Use built-in accessible themes in Power BI if helpful — but always validate contrast and readability manually (or with contrast-checking tools). (See figure below)



### 3. Design & Authoring Best Practices

Beyond formal accessibility settings, think about usability for all users — this often improves overall design quality and readability.

**Start with your audience:** before building visuals/pages — talk with potential report users about their needs, preferences, and how they intend to consume info (visually, via screen reader, keyboard only, etc.).

- **Keep layouts clean, simple, and consistent:** avoid cramming too many visuals on a single page. Use minimal but sufficient visuals and keep style (fonts, slicers, layout) consistent across pages.
- **Avoid redundancy:** don't use more visuals than needed to communicate the same information. Redundant visuals increase cognitive load and clutter.
- **Avoid hiding critical information in tooltips, hover states, or drill-throughs:** Some users may not be able to trigger hover or use a mouse. Important insights should be accessible without relying on hover/tooltips.
- **Use “low-vision / squint test” as a quick check:** dim your screen or squint to simulate low-vision; this helps catch contrast or readability problems before publishing.

#### 4. Pre-Publish Accessibility Checklist

Before publishing any Power BI report or dashboard, run through this checklist to help confirm accessibility.

- ✓ All non-decorative visuals, images, shapes, textboxes have meaningful alt text
- ✓ Every visual and page has a clear, descriptive title; axes, legends, data labels properly labeled
- ✓ Data isn't conveyed by color alone — series differentiated using markers/shapes/patterns or labels
- ✓ Contrast between text/data and background meets accessibility standards (readability tested)
- ✓ Tab order is set logically; decorative items are hidden from tab order
- ✓ Keyboard-only navigation works (tab, shift-tab, enter/space/arrow, etc.)
- ✓ Screen reader reads out visual titles, types, alt text properly (if possible, test with a screen reader)
- ✓ Layout is uncluttered; slicers/filters are consistently placed if repeated across pages
- ✓ No essential information is hidden only in hover/tooltips or interactions that mouse-only users would struggle with

#### 5. Testing, Feedback & Iteration

Accessibility isn't a “one-and-done” step — it requires testing and feedback, especially from people who rely on assistive technologies.

- **Test with keyboard only** — navigate through all report elements (pages, visuals, slicers, filters) using Tab, Shift-Tab, Enter, Esc, arrow keys. Ensure navigation order and focus make sense.

- **Test with a screen reader (if possible)** — check that visuals, alt text, titles, and data tables are announced clearly and meaningfully.
- **Simulate color blindness or low vision** — use contrast-checking tools, color-blind simulators, or simple “squint test” to confirm readability.
- **Gather feedback from real users** — especially users who rely on screen readers, keyboard navigation, or have low vision. Incorporate feedback and iterate.
- **Document usage tips for report consumers** — e.g. “Use Tab to navigate; press Alt+Shift+F11 to view data table; high-contrast mode is supported.”

## Why This Variation Matters to Your Team

By adopting this version of the accessibility guide, you:

- Emphasize **inclusivity** from report conception to publishing
- Encourage **repeatable, consistent practices** across dashboards and authors
- Reduce risk of missing accessibility needs (especially for users with disabilities)
- Improve overall usability — accessible design often leads to cleaner, clearer, more maintainable dashboards