

## Purpose

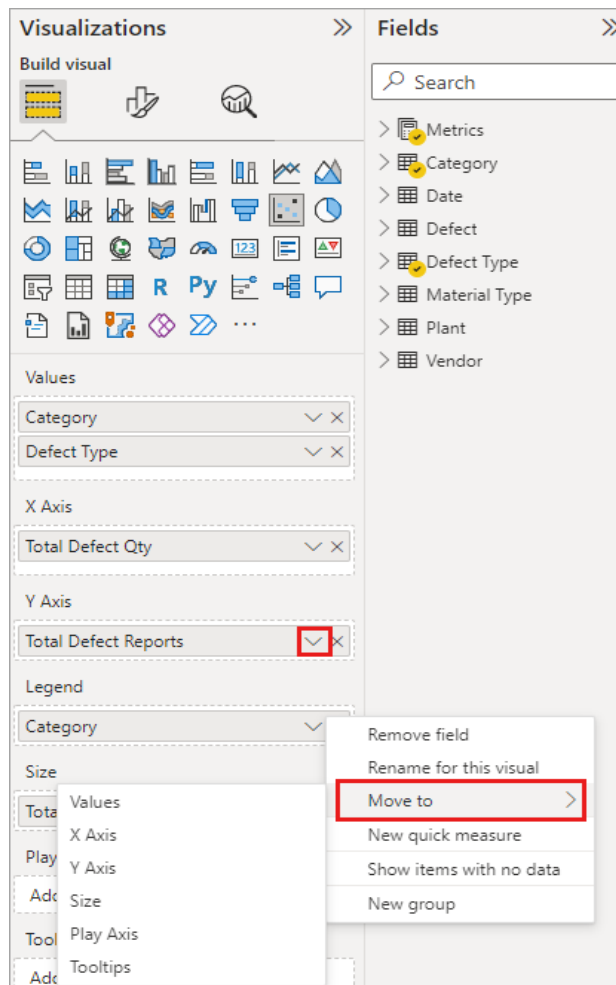
When you build a report with Power BI (Desktop or Service), designing it should be oriented around its usability for everyone — regardless of vision, color perception, physical limitations, or assistive-technology use. The goal with this guide is to create a single report that works broadly, rather than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

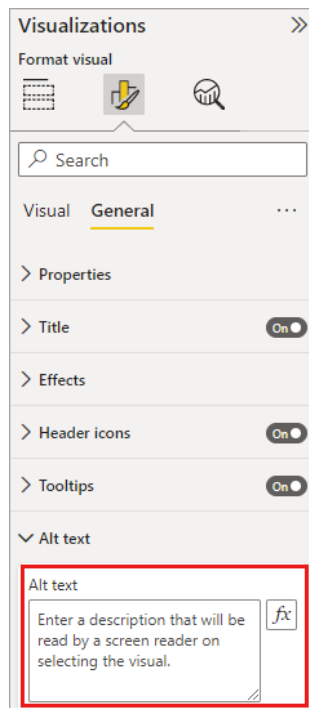


## 2. Accessibility Features You Should Configure

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

### Alt Text for Visuals and Objects

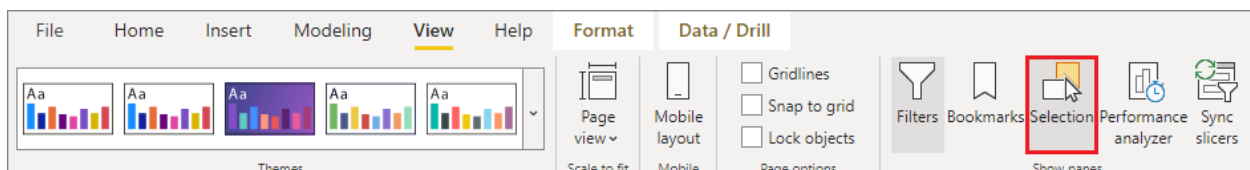
- Provide alt text for **all non-decorative visuals, images, shapes, and textboxes**. (See figure below)

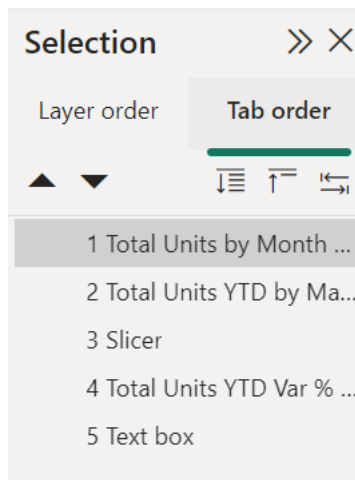


- Alt text should describe **what the visual means / conveys**, not replicate raw data values (because data may change). E.g., describe the insight or purpose rather than listing every number.
- To add alt text: select the object → Format pane → General → Alt Text (capacity: 250 characters).
- Optionally: 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)

\$5,470,593

Economy

Deluxe Class

Regular

Sales Amounts in USD By Sales Size and Country

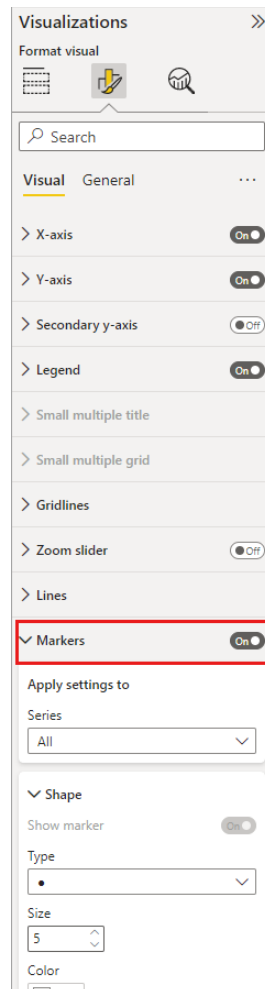
Sale Size	Australia	Canada	France	Germany	Great Britain	United States
Medium	\$1,048,778	\$633,615	\$562,440	\$563,577	\$638,771	\$2,742,435
Large	\$411,848	\$259,435	\$184,870	\$236,386	\$311,476	\$1,469,345
Small	\$439,692	\$303,378	\$222,373	\$209,545	\$267,717	\$1,258,814
Total	\$1,900,318	\$1,196,429	\$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)

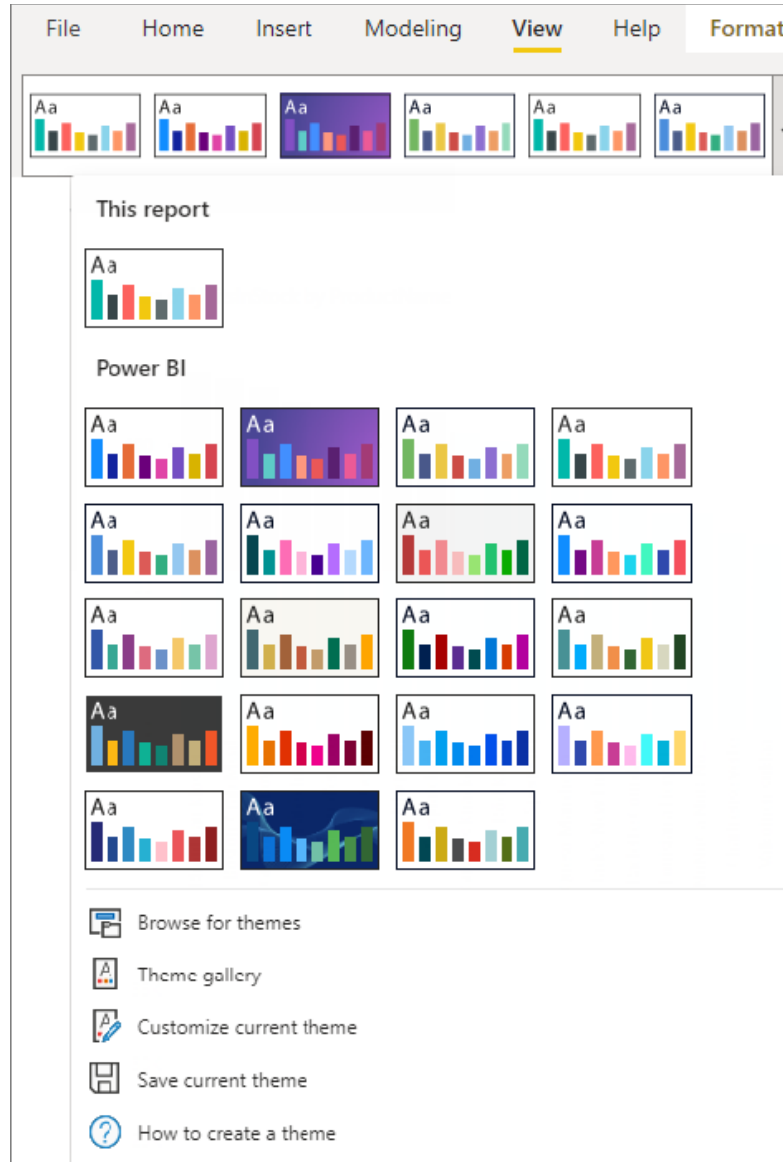


- But avoid over-cluttering visuals — too many markers, labels or patterns can reduce readability. Use a “squint test.”

### 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