

PL-300 Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

— Questions	1h 40m Time limit	700 of 1000 Passing score
\$165 Exam fee	Microsoft Governing body	

The exam at a glance

Item	Value
Credential	Microsoft Certified: Power BI Data Analyst Associate
Level	Intermediate
Time allowed	100 minutes
Question count	Not published by Microsoft
Passing score	700 or greater (scaled, not a percentage)
Fee	Typically US\$165, priced by country or region; tax may apply
Delivery	Proctored via Pearson VUE; may include interactive components
Retake	24 hours after the first attempt; longer for later attempts
Validity	12 months, renewed free on Microsoft Learn

Skills measured (as of 20 April 2026)

Area	Weight
Prepare the data	25-30%
Model the data	25-30%
Visualize and analyze the data	25-30%
Manage and secure Power BI	15-20%

Storage modes

Mode	Use when	Trade-off
Import	Data fits in memory and a scheduled refresh is fresh enough	Fastest queries; data only as current as the last refresh
DirectQuery	Source is huge or must be current at report time	Always current; query speed depends on the source
Composite	Small dimensions imported, huge live fact table in DirectQuery	Best balance; more design complexity

Power Query essentials

- Query folding: steps translated into a native source query. Remove columns and filter rows EARLY to preserve it. A greyed-out View Native Query means folding stopped there and the rest runs locally.
- Merge joins queries side by side on keys; append stacks rows from queries of the same shape.
- Unpivot turns column-per-month into one row per month; pivot does the reverse; transpose flips the whole table.
- Reference starts from another query's output so upstream edits flow through; duplicate copies the steps into an independent chain.
- Parameters centralize values such as file paths. RangeStart and RangeEnd are the reserved names incremental refresh requires.
- Column quality shows valid, error, and empty shares; column profile and column distribution give statistics.
- Change Type With Locale fixes regionally formatted dates imported as text.
- Privacy levels are set per data source and govern whether data may be folded across sources.

Modelling essentials

- Star schema: narrow fact table, descriptive dimensions, one-to-many, single filter direction. Beats a flattened table on both size and speed.
- Date table: contiguous dates, marked as the date table. Fact-table dates have gaps and break time intelligence.
- Role-playing dimension: second relationship inactive, activated per measure with USERELATIONSHIP inside CALCULATE.
- Measure vs calculated column: measure evaluates at query time in filter context and stores nothing; calculated column materializes per row at refresh and costs memory.
- Why totals don't add up: a measure is recomputed in the total row's filter context, so a ratio total is total-over-total, not the sum of row ratios.
- Semi-additive balances need LASTDATE or a closing-balance function — never a plain SUM across dates.
- DIVIDE for safe division; DISTINCTCOUNT for unique counts; REMOVEFILTERS to clear, KEEPFILTERS to preserve.
- Shrink a model by removing unused high-cardinality columns first; they compress worst.

Report features and what they are for

- Drillthrough: navigate to a detail page carrying the selected row's context.
- Bookmark: save and restore report state — filters, selection, visibility, sort — usually behind a button.
- Edit interactions: per visual pair, choose filter, highlight, or none.
- Sync slicers: keep a slicer selection aligned across pages.
- Field parameters: let a slicer switch which measure or field a visual shows.
- Visual calculations: written against the visual's result set, ideal for running totals and share of total.
- Analytics pane: trend lines, forecasts, reference and error bars. Analyze: explain an increase or decrease.
- Key influencers ranks factors behind an outcome; the decomposition tree drills, and high-value path auto-expands the biggest contributor.
- Accessibility: set tab order, add alt text, never encode meaning in color alone.
- Paginated report for fixed-layout printing; phone view for mobile layout; automatic page refresh for DirectQuery wall displays.

Manage and secure

- Workspace roles: Viewer consumes; Contributor publishes and edits; Member also shares and adds lower roles; Admin manages everything including users.
- Row-level security: DAX filter in a role, members assigned in the service. Defining a role in Desktop filters nobody until

members are added.

- Report filters hide, RLS restricts. If the requirement is security, it is RLS.
- Gateway: required for the service to reach on-premises sources for refresh or DirectQuery.
- App: the way to distribute curated content read-only to a large audience without granting edit rights.
- Build permission: lets other authors create reports on a shared semantic model.
- Endorsement (Promoted, Certified) signals quality; certification is restricted to designated reviewers. Sensitivity labels signal confidentiality and persist into exports.
- Data alert fires on a dashboard card, gauge, or KPI tile at a threshold; subscription emails a snapshot on a schedule.
- Lineage view maps upstream and downstream dependencies before a breaking change.
- Shared capacity caps daily scheduled refreshes; dedicated capacity raises the ceiling.

Official sources

- Microsoft Learn — Study guide for Exam PL-300: Microsoft Power BI Data Analyst:
<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/credentials/certifications/resources/study-guides/pl-300>
- Microsoft Learn — Microsoft Certified: Power BI Data Analyst Associate — Exam PL-300:
<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/credentials/certifications/exams/pl-300/>
- Microsoft Learn — Microsoft Certifications — Exam frequently asked questions:
<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/credentials/certifications/frequently-asked-questions>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/exams/power-bi-data-analyst-pl-300/practice-test