Power BI Licensing Overview

Power BI offers a variety of licensing options to cater to different user needs—ranging from individual users to enterprise-level deployments. Understanding these licensing models helps organizations choose the most cost-effective and scalable solution for their business intelligence needs.

Types of Power BI Licensing

Power BI Free (Individual License)
- Designed for personal use and data exploration.
- Ideal for learning and developing reports and dashboards.
- Cannot share content or collaborate using Power BI Service.

Power BI Pro
- Per-user license for collaboration and content sharing.
- Allows users to create app workspaces and publish content.
- All collaborators must have Pro licenses.

Power BI Premium Per User (PPU)
- Advanced features on a per-user basis.
- Supports paginated reports, AI capabilities, deployment pipelines.
- Larger dataset support and more frequent data refresh (48/day).

Power BI Premium (Capacity-Based Licensing)
- Dedicated capacity purchased at the organizational level.
- Allows sharing with free users via Power BI Apps.
- Supports large datasets, high refresh rates, and report server.

Power BI Embedded
- Designed for ISVs and developers.
- Embed reports into custom apps or websites.
- Usage billed through Azure based on capacity.

Comparison: Power BI Free vs Pro vs Premium vs PPU

Feature	Free	Pro	Premium Per User (PPU)	Premium Capacity
Share reports/dashboards	✖	✅	✅	✅
Collaborate in workspaces	✖	✅	✅	✅
Scheduled data refresh	8/day	8/day	48/day	48/day
Paginated reports	✖	✖	✅	✅
AI/ML models & cognitive services	✖	✖	✅	✅
On-premises Report Server	✖	✖	✖	✅
Embed into apps	✖	✅ (limited)	✅	✅
Dataset size limit	1 GB	1 GB	100 GB	400 GB
Audience sharing to free users	✖	✖	✖	✅
Pricing	Free	~$10/user/month	~$20/user/month	Starts ~$4,995/month

Benefits of Power BI Premium Over Power BI Pro

- Enterprise-Scale Deployment: Allows sharing with free users, ideal for large organizations.
- Dedicated Capacity: Improved performance through reserved resources (CPU & RAM).
- Larger Data Models: Supports datasets up to 400 GB compared to 1 GB in Pro.
- Advanced AI & Data Features: Access to AutoML, cognitive services, and advanced analytics.
- Increased Refresh Rate: Up to 48 refreshes per day, vs 8 in Pro.
- Power BI Report Server: Enables on-premises report hosting, vital for regulated industries.
- Paginated Reports Support: Create pixel-perfect reports for printing (e.g., invoices).
- Deployment Pipelines: Manage dev, test, and prod environments efficiently.

Final Recommendation

Scenario	Recommended License
Personal learning or prototyping	Power BI Free
Team collaboration	Power BI Pro
Analyst needing advanced tools	Power BI Premium Per User
Company-wide distribution	Power BI Premium (Capacity)
SaaS app embedding	Power BI Embedded