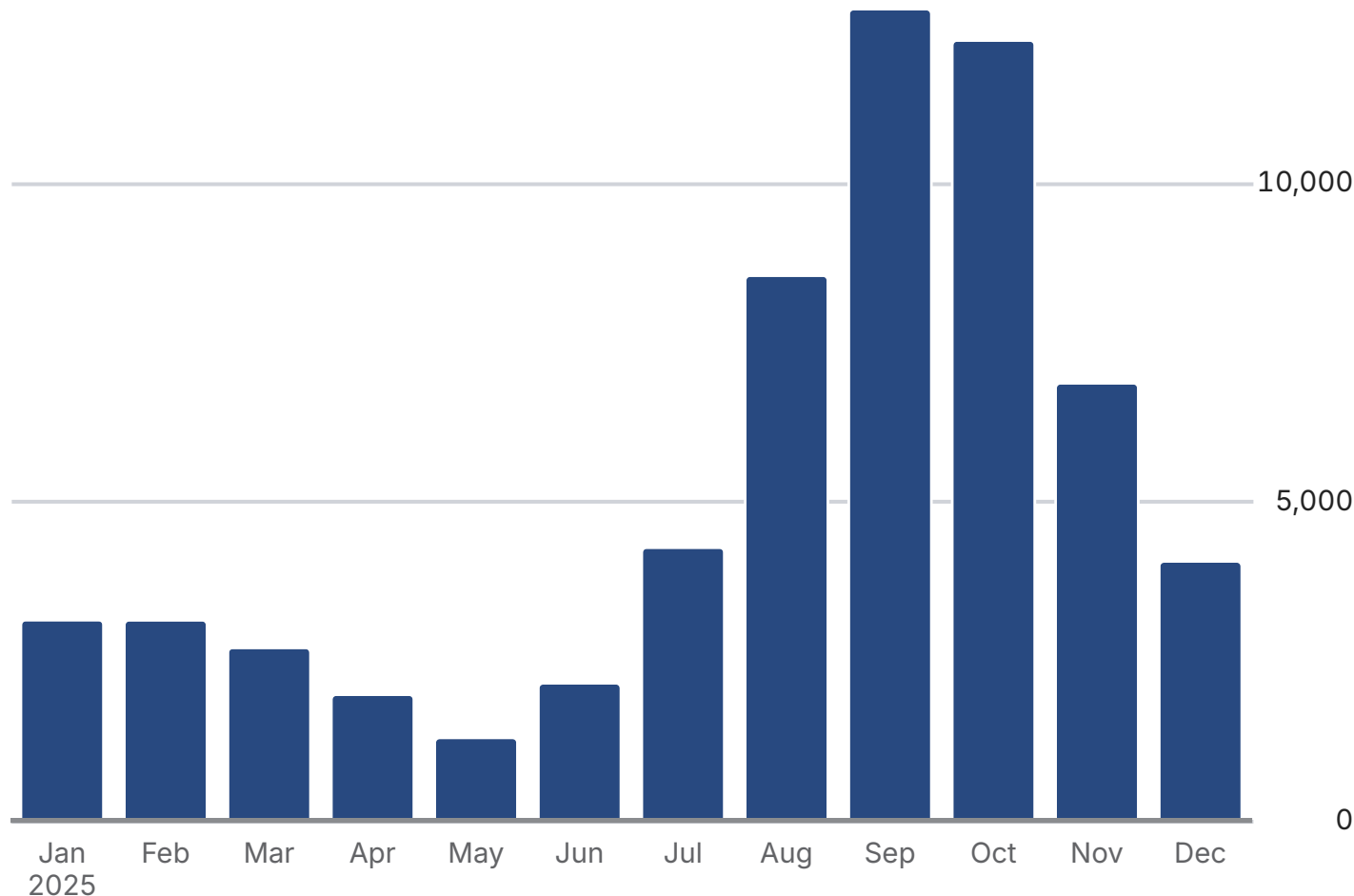


Column chart



Columns rise from a shared baseline like stacks of stuff, each one a total compared by height. Use them for counts and amounts across a handful of categories or periods. Always start them at zero, because a cut-off column misstates its own size. Playfair, who published some of the first bar charts, explained the idea with a pile of coins:

“Suppose the money received by a man in trade were all in guineas, and that every evening he made a single pile of all the guineas received during the day . . . time, proportion, and amount, would all be physically combined” (William Playfair, *The Commercial and Political Atlas*, 1786).

Also called: vertical bar chart, pipe-organ chart

Variations: [Line chart](#)—connect the tops into a curve. · [Bar chart](#)—turn it on its side. · [Grouped column chart](#)—split each column by series, side by side. · [Stacked column chart](#)—stack the series. · [Lollipop chart](#)—thin the bar to a stem and cap it with a dot. · [Histogram](#)—bin the values. · [Floating bar chart](#)—float the bar off the baseline. · [Bullet chart](#)—shade qualitative bands behind a thin bar and mark the target. · [Bar and line chart](#)—layer a line.