

Ideas: From the Prototype To Your Layout

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Details from the Prototype to Your Layout

Adding Life and Details around the House.

People talking at the door.
Vegetable and/or flower gardens.
Working in the garden.
Working on the car.
Kids on swings or teeter totters, or in the sandbox.
Hanging clothes out to dry.
Beating a rug.
Painting the house.
Washing windows.
Building an addition or an outbuilding.
Sweeping the porch.
Talking over the fence.
Playing with the dog.
The dog sleeping by or on its dog house.
Loafing in a hammock.
Having a picnic or barbeque.
Playing in the kids pool.
In the larger scales,
use smaller scale vehicles for kids toys.
A kids Kool Aid™ stand.
Checking the mail, talking with the mail carrier.
Kids waiting (with eager anticipation) for the school bus.
Railroadiana collection in the yard.
Truck making a delivery.
Unloading furnace coal into the basement coal bin.
Side walk or hanging flags, planters, trash bins, mail boxes.
People seen through the windows.
Window or outside air conditioners.
Bird baths, gazing balls in the yard or garden.
Milk bottles on stoop. Milk man making a delivery on the stoop or at the side milk box.
Back yard tent for a wedding or party.
Kids camping out back.
Taking out the garbage.
Trucks picking up the garbage.
Outside door and stairs to an upstairs apt.
Yard shed or small green house.
Cutting up a fallen tree.
Moving furniture in or out.
Couch on the porch.
Window boxes w/flowers.
Packing/unpacking the car for a trip.
Sunbathing, sitting in lounge chairs,
Sitting on a porch swing.
Working on a garden railway.
A meter reader.
Toys on the drive way.
Junk around or in back of the garage.
Utility boxes on or next to the house.
Electric wire from house to garage.
Washing the car.
Window shades and/or curtains.
Awnings over some windows.
Fuller Brush™ or Avon™ salesperson on porch.
Campaign signs on a lawn.

Adding Life and Details around an Apartment building.

Exterior drainpipes from the kitchen and bathroom areas.
Roof drain piping.
Utilities box or boxes. (off of an Atlas phone pole)
Exterior lights over the door.
Electrical connection insulators on buildings. (off of a cheap phone pole)
Roof access stairway.
Window shades set at various heights and in differing colors.
Interior view blocks.
Women in conversation on front &/or back steps.
Woman on fire escape who may be talking to someone on the ground.
Or taking a smoke break.
Or talking to someone from another building.
Sunbathers on roof. Towels made out of Post it Note™ paper.
People looking out of windows.
People inside, seen through windows.
A friend, or date, in a car waiting for another person
A meter reader.
Children playing on the sidewalk. Hopscotch Lines.
Action aground garbage cans, putting out the garbage, garbage being picked up,
Cats around the cans.
Window washer.
Postal carrier.
A delivery person checking the address.
A service van, utility, appliance or furnace repair, plumbing, painting or Orkin™ truck.

Rule #1: It is your model railroad.
Rule # 2 Model Railroading is Fun

Bringing Life to the Layout

Downtown

Adding Life to the City, Town or Village

On the Sidewalks, have people...

- In conversational groups.
- Looking store windows.
- Looking at a restaurant menu in the window.
- Restaurant patio seating.
- Walk up Ice Cream window.
- Vending machines or an ATM machine.
- Putting packages or groceries into the car or trunk.
- Leaning over and talking to someone inside a car.
- Putting money into a parking meter.
- Writing out a parking ticket.
- Discussing the ticket with the kind officer or meter maid.
- Admiring a baby in a stroller.
- Hawking newspapers.
- Panhandling. Busking.
- Sweeping the sidewalk.
- Selling Girl Scout cookies.
- Using a sidewalk elevator to make a delivery.
- Fixing a broken sidewalk.
- Waiting for a crossing light.
- Using the steps down to a basement shop.
- Waiting at the bus or streetcar stop.
- Hailing a cab.
- Making a delivery from a truck in the road.
- Unloading coal into the basement coal bin.
- Picking up garbage or bottles from the sidewalk or in the alley.
- On the outside stairs to apartments.
- A couple saying goodbye at the door to the upstairs apts.

Additional possible details around the sidewalks.

- Signs to upstairs offices and in the upper windows.
- Awnings over the display windows. An/or upper windows.
- Display bins in front of the stores.
- Sandwich boards in front of the stores.
- Penny scale outside of a store. Cigar store Indian.
- Rotating barber pole.
- Signs perpendicular to the building.
- Flags hanging from the building or on the sidewalk.
- Billboard in a vacant lot between buildings.
- Billboards mounted on building roofs.
- Sunbathers on the roof.
- Roof top patio or garden.
- People hanging out of the windows.
- Flower pots in front of the windows.
- Curtains blowing out of an open window.
- People on balconies.
- Laundry hanging across the alley between buildings.
- Delivery trucks in the alley between or behind buildings.

Around The Factory or Industry

Adding Life to the Workplace

Think about where people are most likely to be found in and around the following locations.

Near entrances to buildings:

- Talking together before entering or leaving.
- Looking for a key or pass, or waiting for the door to be opened.
- Making an office delivery.

On or near loading docks:

- With dollies or handcarts, loaded or empty.
- The dock foreman at a stand up desk.
- Sitting around on a break.
- Working on or with a forklift.
- Waiting for the RR crew to deliver the car.

In and around parking lots:

- Talking in pairs or groups before getting into their cars
- Looking under the hood of a balky car.
- Jump starting a car.
- Loading stuff into the trunk.
- Fixing a flat tire.
- Admiring someone's new car.

In designated smoking areas:

- On fire escapes.
- Near entrances and loading doors, inside or out.

At employee outside eating areas:

- Sitting at a picnic table.
- Sitting on boxes and crates.
- With a lunch truck serving them.

Doing maintenance and repair work on equipment:

- Welding.
- Bolting / unbolting stubborn nuts and bolts.
- Painting, buildings, equipment or products.
- New foundations for equipment or machinery.
- Working on or inside control boxes.

Building and grounds work:

- Painting.
- Washing windows.
- Patching or doing point work on the bricks.
- Roof repairs.
- Lawn and garden work.
- Fixing doors, swing and overhead styles.
- digging ditches for what ever reason.
- Installing or changing signs.

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Bringing Life to the Layout

The Train

Adding Life to the Train, ie., Keeping the Crew Busy.

- Put a crew member onto the caboose platform.
- On switchers, locate a brakeman on the platform, or if your brave, on the pilot step.
- Add hobo(s) to a boxcar, with the door open.
- In the truss rod era, place some planks across the rods for the hobos to ride on.
- Place a hobo in a gon. Sometimes, special loads had and escort riding along as well.
- Modern era, put your hobo into one of the cars on your open auto rack.
- Have a crew member riding the steps or end ladder or platform of a car during a switch move.
- On a passenger car, have a trainman or porter at the dutch door.
- No drumhead for your train, put the conductor or a railfan in the vestibule looking back or taking pictures.
- Can't fit people into the dome or car seats, cut the legs off. It won't be noticed. Figures from the next scale down might also work.
- On a covered hopper, put some workers on the top taking test samples from the load.
- Flat car, place a worker on the car directing the crane operator.
- Covered hopper or tank car, place some workers next to the car with unloading equipment.
- In the back of the yard, some kids with spray cans. That graffiti has to get on somehow.
- Have an empty box car, gon or flat with some workers sweeping it out or otherwise cleaning it up.
- With a box car at a loading dock, have a fork lift in the car. Don't forget to have a sheet metal bridge between the car and the dock.
- Actually have some sheep, pigs or cattle in the stock car.
- Stock cars were often used to carry brick on return trips. Have one being loaded or unloaded.
- Have a crew working to unload tractors or dozer from a flat car onto an end or side ramp, or onto a truck.
- Have a crew unloading autos from an auto box car.
- Have a crew unloading lumber, stick by stick from a box car.
Note, some cars had a small end door for this purpose, or if you can, open up the end doors of a so equipped box car.

Along the Road

Adding Life to the Highway.

- Fixing a flat tire.
- With a tow truck.
- Motorcycle cop behind the bill board.
- Traffic stop.
- A car or truck being towed out of a ditch. A tow truck or a farmer's tractor doing the work.
- Out of the car, looking at a map.
- A survey crew.
- Pot hole repair.
- Accident scene.
- Road kill. One of the etched brass companies makes these.
- Car lights in a tunnel, taillights especially effective.
- Ducks crossing the road, traffic stopped.
- Deer feeding along side the road.
- Lineman up a pole with service truck alongside.
- Modern lineman up in a truck mounted cherry picker.
- A crew putting in a new pole.
- A crew repainting a bill board.
- Hitchhiker(s).
- A farmer fixing a fence.
- Add guard rails, post and wire or metal, depending on era.
- Crew doing bridge repair or repainting.
- Burma Shave™ signs.
- Topical billboards that establish time frame or location.
- Use bill boards to advertise your own business or a friends business.
- Campaign signs.
- Dilapidated bill board or sign.
- Cyclists or joggers at rest.
- Dog being walked, Dog is sniffing around, so further motion not required. Often the only thing exercised in walking a dog is patience.
- Mail truck or jeep, making stops.
- School bus letting kids on or off.

Other possible scenes.

- Church wedding.
- Church bazaar or festival.
- Cemetery funeral.
- Picketers or protesters.
- Building on fire.

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Ideas from the Prototype to Your Layout

Enhancing the Railroad Yard

- Use a house for the RR Co. offices.
- Install overhead piping around the building and across the tracks.
- Put some horseshoe shaped expansion sections in the piping.
- Add a pedestrian bridge, or a closed pedestrian bridge across the rail yard.
- Add a loading dock crane.
- Add puddles to the area around the yard.

Enhancing the Engine Service Areas

- Use a commercial tank truck to fuel the locomotives.
- If you don't have room for a large area, just use a small fenced in area for your locomotive.

Loads

- Wheels and/or trucks on flat cars or in gons.
- Grain doors, wood or paper, on an open door 40' box car.
- Steam locomotive on a flat car on its way to a museum.
- Street car on a flat or in a gon on its way to a museum.
- Scrapped caboose (or other car type) in a gon or tied down on a flat.
- Derrick or crane in a train with its boom on a flat car or in a gon.
- Helium tank car at its delivery site.
- A railcar repair facility - a destination for any type of car and for junk railcars.

What to do with Equipment you can't use.

- Use a tank car as a stationary fuel tank.
- Use the ends of two streamlined round end observation cars as office.
- Use flat cars as piggyback ramps or end loading ramps. Also used as bridges.
- Cut up box cars used as storage sheds.
- Box cars, caboose, motor cars and passenger cars on the ground as sheds, offices and even temporary stations.
- Engines being scrapped, worked on or repowered.

Work trains make use of otherwise useless equipment.

- Extra observation cars demoted to work train use.
- Old steam locomotive tenders as water or oil tanks on work trains.
- Step vans replace or augment work trains.
- Even the prototype can have a really bad decal or paint job.

Things to put into odd shaped spaces.

- Water tanks - these can also be used to add identity to a town or an industry.
- Fancy fire hydrant, probably would work better in G scale.
- Signs:
 - Identify the railroad or its facilities.
 - Can be used to identify the location.
 - Can be used to identify the era.
 - * Can advertise your business.
 - Can add humor or interest.
 - Can identify a special interest.
 - Can advertise dinner trains, preserved RRs or tourist operations.

Track Side Enhancements.

- Propane tank at a switch or diamond.
- A disconnected siding.
- A crossing shanty - with the guard kibitzing with railfans.
- An abandoned water tower - lower sections or foundations.
- Building foundations.
- Abandoned station cellars.
- Abandoned right of ways, abutments and cuttings.

Special Effects and Mini Scenes.

- Track gates or smash gates that operate with a switch machine or linkage.
- Tunnel door that operates with a slow motion switch machine.
- Train crew at the end of a car during switch moves.
- Road grader (or the like) with a couple to act as a switch engine.

Parks and Back Yards

- Preserved steam engine with railfan photographers.
- Preserved caboose, with or without kids on it.
- Caboose in a backyard with other railwayana.

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Bringing Life to the Layout

Some Tools and Techniques

Adhesives:

Aleene's Original Tacky Glue™ gold bottle.
Aleene's Quick Dry Tacky Glue™ silver bottle.
Aleene's Thick Designer Tacky Glue™ rose colored label
Elmers™, full strength and diluted, as appropriate
Micro Crystal Clear™, for making and glueing windows.
Weldbond™,
Canopy Glue-Formula 560™, for making and glueing windows.
Department 56 Tacky Wax™ for temporary placement of items.
Faller Super Expert Plastic Cement™ has a nice needle applicator.

If you are using a foam base on your layout, drilling a small hole in the foot of the figure or detail part and inserting the end of a strait pin into it, allows for easy placement and replacement on the layout.

By drilling the same size hole in a structure or hard base, a more secure placement of the item can be obtained.

In my experience, #71 drill fits a strait pin. Your circumstances may vary.

Figures and details can be enhanced by a wash of dilute india ink.

Using unpainted figures cuts costs and provides variety.

To make the task easier, paint a flesh toned base color, then do a number of figures at the same time by using one color on a number of them, those with blue jeans for example, then the next color, white shirts perhaps, and then the next color and so on.

Try to maintain the correct proportion of brown eyed and blue eyed individuals. (see next item).

In the smaller scales, you are probably better off not trying to do facial details. Let the viewers imagination fill in the details.