

What Type of Base is Best? BY ASHLEY ABERNATHY

For Starters:

- ✓ Keep in mind the orientation of the model on the base...parallel with the base edges looks dull. Even a slight corner to corner orientation brings "drama" to the model and makes it look interesting.
- ✓ If displaying on a base ALWAYS have a decorative edge; round over, fluted, angled, etc. A vertical straight edge looks dull, however it may look good if another raised area is above the base with scenic material for a display or diorama.

Flat Base: round/square/ rectangle/irregular	Aircraft	Armor	Autos	Ships	Figures	Dioramas Small	Dioramas Large	Space/ Sci-Fi (vehicles) In Space	Space/ Sci-Fi (vehicles) On Landing Gear/Wheels
Hard wood, w/ stain	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Good	Best	Best
Hard/Soft wood with paint	Fair	Good	Better	Poor	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Soft wood with DARK stain	Better	Better	Better	Better	Good	Better	Better	Good	Good
Soft wood with LIGHT stain	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
Resin bases	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Better	Good	Poor	Good	Good
Picture Frame	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Best	Best	Fair	Fair
Old "Wood like" plaques	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Better	Fair	Fair	Good	Good
Foam Board with a scenic display	Fair	Best	Good	Poor	Better	Best	Poor	Fair	Good
Others: Metal, clear plastics, multiple items	Good	Good	Better	Good	Fair	Poor	Poor	Good	Good
Mirrors	Best	Good	Best	Poor	Poor	n/a	n/a	Fair	Fair

Flat Base Notes:

- a) "Soft woods are economical choices and with some effort will hold stain well and looks good when painted with a satin or high gloss.
- b) Hardwood is better."
- c) Unstained or Unpainted woods (i.e. a board) ...let's put it this way, just don't even use it. Plywood, with exposed grain is an absolute no no.
- d) In most cases models on any well stained wooden base always off a better presentation and more attractive look than painted bases.
- e) Resin bases are OK but should look like painted wood OR blended into a wooden base. Bubble holes must be filled or it just doesn't look right.
- f) Picture frames usually are best for dioramas because of the larger size. Most are premade/stained and or painted. Overall it's not really the best choice as the decorative molding has too much relief and looks busy. Stay away from the metal frames. Be sure the corners are all sealed up. A slight misalignment and at least two corners are opened.
- g) Using former award plaques are ok. Most of these are veneered pressed (MDF) or particle board. They tend to be quickly recognized as such and the modeler loses the viewers admiration that the entire presentation (model and base) are not made by hand. Stay away from the colored or marbled bases. Since most are particle-board, make sure the edges are not chipped or dented.
- h) Foam board like the board used for insulating homes, goes a long way can be lightly carved and makes for a very nice scenic base especially armor models where a scene is applied most of the time. The viewer gets the impression that a vehicle and its surrounding area have been "cut" out of the earth and placed on the table.

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Most of these displays are raised an inch or so off the table that helps to "hold up" the model to the viewer. For aircraft, foam boards should only be used for a scene or as a tarmac or carrier deck scene.

- i) Other bases from metal sheets such as a part of a hood from a NASCAR, or tail end of an ME109 can be used with great effect. Keep it reasonable in size to complement the model and not take away from it.
- j) Busy scenes are created when too many objects are clustered on a flat base and this takes away from the centerpiece - the model. Examples include honoring a person by including a photo and memorabilia on a base, medals, ribbons, name tag, rank insignia, first tooth, old arm cast from 3rd grade, you get the idea. This also includes parts from the model kit that "lay around" such as hoods, wheels etc. Too much of a good thing can distract from the centerpiece of the display.
- k) Mirrors are excellent for anything that has a nice underside and you want people to see it. So even though it's a poor base in general...if there is something to be seen underneath then the mirror is the best. ESPECIALLY if you do not want a judge to pick up the model because it's very fragile. The best use is for aircraft and cars.

Other Bases	Aircraft	Armor	Autos	Ships	Figures	Dioramas Small	Dioramas Large	Space/ Sci-Fi (vehicles) In Space	Space/ Sci-Fi (vehicles) On Landing Gear/Wheels
Round, Elliptical - Raised, Trophy	Good	Good	Better	Poor	Best	Better	Poor	Better	Better
Square/rectangle - Raised, Trophy	Fair	Better	Better	Good	Best	Best	Good	Poor	Best
Others: Metal, clear plastics, objects	Fair	Fair	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	Best	Poor
Enclosed cases (clear over a wood base)	Fair	Fair	Good	Best	Best	Good	Good	Poor	Good

Other Base Notes:

- a) Raised bases imply something greater than say 3/4" (standard board height) on up. Anything over than about 6" for a single mode doesn't look right. Exceptions may be a figure, plane, a space craft in flight, or multiple model display with various heights. The danger is; the model/base is prone to being knocked over.
- b) Raised bases used in dioramas or small vignettes can yield dramatic results when used in conjunction with elevation changes like showing a cliff or steep embankment scene. Or where the raised space allows for a picture or name plate that is not laying horizontal to the table.
- c) Raised bases (Pedestals) on a flat base are excellent choices for small subjects and figures...definitely not for larger ones. Used in dioramas or small vignettes, a raised display can yield dramatic results when used in conjunction with elevation changes like showing a cliff or steep embankment scene.
- d) An enclosed case is a great way to display a model and preferred way to display ships and figures and even autos due to their delicate and or pristine nature. Bottom line it's also a great way to keep dust and wondering hands off your model. Although, a poorly build case or one with scratches will quickly deter from the model. For contests its always best to remove the case especially for judging time.