

Hobby Scale Sizes

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Each hobby category has popular scales and many scales have evolved since prewar years scaling both up and down with precision from 1:1000 up to a large scale of 1:12. My grandfather for example artfully welded together a model train that we could ride in probably in a scale of about 1:7. By exploring the ranges from 1:12 to 1:220 we will cover most of the popular hobby genres.

Much like electrical standards, there is not a universal worldwide hobby standard. For example, if you compare model trains in the US, the O gauge trains are 1:48, while in Europe, the NEM standard for model railroading O gauge is 1:45, and in the UK O gauge is 1:43.

Let's compare the more common standards for several hobby categories:

Dollhouses

1:12 is considered large scale and is most popular for dollhouses with ceilings 8-11" high. Consider this as 12 times smaller than a human house or 1 inch equal to 1 foot.

1:24, also called half scale, is the second most popular scale for doll houses. Some detailed plane models also come 1:24 and 1:30. Here 1" equals 2 feet or is 24 times smaller.

Model Aircraft

1:35 is used for helicopters.

1:72 is most popular for aircraft, figures and vehicles where 1" equals 6'. This crosses more genres than other scales.

Model Ships

1:75, 1:96, 1:108, 1:150 are all popular ship building sizes.

Model Trains

1:20 to 1:22.5 is called G scale and is most associated with garden trains. G gauge refers to the distance between the inside of the rails (1.75" or 45mm). Note: The USA G scale is 1:20.3 and is sometimes referred to as F scale.

1:43 and 1:48 or ¼ scale is associated with O scale trains with 2 or 3 rail tracks. This scale is dominated by Lionel and is also the second most popular scale for planes. You'll find compatible cars and trucks in 1:43, 1:48, and 1:50 scale.

1:64 is found in S scale model trains with the most popular brand being the American Flyer.

1:87, the most popular railroad modeling scale, is called HO or Half O.

1:160 is for N scale model trains which is gaining popularity. The footprint typically hosts a 2" engine almost half the size of the HO train. The name comes from the N in the Nine mm distance between the tracks.

1:220 is the Z scale model train, the smallest train scale, introduced by Marklin. It's just plain cute.

Each of the railroad scales also offer a huge array of complementary structures, vehicles, boats, signs, figures, etc. for extensive creative layouts.

The scales vary widely between hobby categories, but you can integrate several for a realistic look and feel. Although many categories provide a wide variety of offerings within their realm, you can cross and mix more disciplines together for fun. For example, fly a 1:72 plane over a 1:75 ship model, or combine a 1:35 scale helicopter flying in range of your 1:24 doll house and G scale train.

So, consider expanding your hobby genre for fun, creativity, interest, and leisurely pleasure with a greater understanding of scale standards.

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