



LEGO® Train Display

# FAQ

(Frequently Asked Questions)

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<http://www.ncltc.cc>

[info@ncltc.cc](mailto:info@ncltc.cc)



## **I didn't know LEGO® made trains. Are they something new?**

LEGO® trains have been around since the 1960s in one form or another. In 1966 came the first sets with track and battery powered motors. LEGO® trains are usually divided into three groups based on their operating voltage, but all are compatible to a certain extent. They all run on the same gauge track, measuring just over 4 LEGO® studs internally. Battery trains (4.5V) and 12V DC electric trains were available concurrently through 1992. Unfortunately, the 12V sets were never available in North America. The current 9V series has been available since 1990, and is the main focus of this display. A fairly comprehensive review of LEGO® trains was collected by Matt Bates and is hosted on the North Georgia LEGO® Train Club web site [ [www.ngltc.org/train\\_depot](http://www.ngltc.org/train_depot) ].

## **This stuff isn't "real" model railroading, is it?**

LEGO® trains are toys as well as models. They are similar in ambiance to the classic toy trains of the early 20th century, in that they cannot be, and are not intended to be, exact scale replicas of prototype equipment. They can get close, and are a significant challenge to build and operate as they involve more "scratch building" than most commercial scale model railroad kits. And, they're kid pleasers.

## **Are they kits or do you just make them up?**

Many of the trains here today are from regular LEGO® kits, but most of what you see is custom designed and built. These custom models were built by AFOLs (Adult Fans Of LEGO®), using standard LEGO® bricks, without any instructions. Try to guess which models are originals! The nice thing about LEGO® trains is that you can always change what you have built. If you don't like the original LEGO® designs, you can change them into anything you can imagine. It's the ultimate in kit bashing, with no waste as your mistakes just go back in your parts bins!

## **Is this ALL yours?**

All of the LEGO® you see on the layout is privately owned. The buildings, mountains, vehicles, trains were assembled by the group of people participating in the show layout. The LEGO® Company has very generously donated most of the LEGO® bricks in the "kid's play area". We would like to thank The LEGO® Company for their help in making the "kid's play area" a reality.

## **I've never seen LEGO® like this in stores, where do you buy the sets and parts?**

Unfortunately, few stores carry LEGO® trains, and if they do, it is a very limited selection. Most of the parts and trains you see here were bought directly from the LEGO® "Shop at Home" service. You may reach them by phone at 1-800-835-4386 and they will send you the latest catalog. You may also go to the LEGO® website [ [LEGO.com](http://LEGO.com) ] and look under trains for the current selection to buy over the web.

In addition, there are a number of AFOLs who are marketing their own designs, targeted at the adult hobbyist who enjoys additional features and complexity. Visit 'The Guild of Bricksmiths' website [ [www.bricksmiths.com](http://www.bricksmiths.com) ] for more information.

You'll also need parts to make your own creations; lots of them! One of the best resources for individual LEGO® parts is BrickLink [ [www.bricklink.com](http://www.bricklink.com) ]. Other websites you'll want to visit are the official LEGO® site [ [www.lego.com](http://www.lego.com) ] and the LEGO® Users Group Network

[ [www.lugnet.com](http://www.lugnet.com) ]. LUGNET™ is the place online where all things LEGO® are discussed. If LEGO® makes it, there is a discussion forum for it on LUGNET™. Without LUGNET™ (and its "predecessor", the Rec.Toys.LEGO newsgroup), none of us would have "met", and you wouldn't be seeing this display today.

### **How can I contact you for more information?**

You may contact NCLTC by sending an e-mail to [info@ncltc.cc](mailto:info@ncltc.cc). NCLTC is an informal group of adult LEGO® enthusiasts based in the Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill and extended area. More information on NCLTC can be found at the NCLTC web site [ [www.ncltc.cc](http://www.ncltc.cc) ]. At this site you'll find photos of our layouts from past shows. You are also welcome to read and/or participate in our discussion group [ [news.lugnet.com/trains/org/ncltc/](http://news.lugnet.com/trains/org/ncltc/) ]. We are always looking for more people to contribute to the layout. If you are interested , please don't hesitate to contact us.

### **Are there other groups like yours?**

Yes, in fact there are quite a few and more forming all of the time. Two groups in particular pioneered the large scale group LEGO® train layout. The Pacific Northwest LEGO® Train Club (aka PNLTC – [www.pnltc.org](http://www.pnltc.org)) formed in 1997 and exhibited at the Portland GATS show that year. The Greater Midwest LEGO® Train Club (aka GMLTC) has one of the more impressive layouts as all of the modules are constructed entirely out of LEGO bricks and all of the bricks are owned by one individual! Some pictures of this layout can be seen on the GMLTC web site [ [www.gmltc.org](http://www.gmltc.org) ]. Visit the International LEGO® Train Club Organization (aka ILTCO) web site [ [www.iltco.org](http://www.iltco.org) ] to see additional LEGO® Train Clubs and where they are located. The ILTCO web site also has an extensive library of resources for clubs starting out.

### **This is great, but it sounds expensive. Are many specialized parts required?**

You can get started relatively inexpensively, (costs per car are similar to high quality G or tin-plate) as the train specific parts needed are a very small percentage of the total parts in any given model. The "kid's play area" is a great example of this. The layout consists of a figure-eight track which is constructed from three boxes of curved rails (4520), one box of straight rails (4515), and a cross track (4519). In addition to the train itself, a typical LEGO® train set includes an oval of track (16 sections of curved track and two or four sections of straight track) and a speed regulator. The only other train specific pieces are train wheels and a train motor which were provided by members from NCLTC. The other pieces are the same "bits of imagination" you'd find inside any other LEGO® set. Of course, the usual way to start with LEGO® trains is to buy a set that has all the necessary pieces and add parts to it. The diagram on the following page illustrates the various LEGO® train parts.

