The difference between toy train and "Model Railroad"!
Tools

Sharp X-Acto knife
Nippers
Sanding block
Sanding sticks
Hand square
Assembly jig
Weights
Clamps
Rubber bands
Spray paint
Plastic filler
General Suggestions

Cut parts off sprues, don't break them off.
Remove flash before painting
Sand joints, check often for squareness
Use blue painters tape to hold small parts for painting.

*Paint everything!*

Paint wall interiors black
Black construction paper view block
Curtains or shades in windows (Paint or paper)
Test fit all joints before gluing
Roof details
  Awnings
  Figures
Dry-transfer Signs in windows
Combine parts from other kits, make yours unique!
Choose a kit!

Have an idea of the size and shape of your building
Photocopy kit walls

• Use the photocopies to plan your cuts

• Use foam core as a mock-up

• Make adjustments to the mock up as to not ruin the actual kit

• Plan a "waste" course of brick at each cut - sand to smooth and even the future joints

• Glue the edges add styrene bracing

• Use Squadron Putty to fill any gaps
Mock-up allowed view of finished building

Adjustments can be made prior to building your kit  All that's left are the details and signs
Use nippers or flush cutters for removing parts from sprues.
Shorten walls
Cut along a mortar line

Plan a "waste" mortar line for sanding
Sand the edges

Use a block of wood, square, or "True sander", to keep edges straight. Check often to ensure "square and "straight"!
Re-join the shortened walls

Use plastic welding cement
Brace with styrene strips
Fill gaps with squadron putty
Protect surrounding wall with scotch tape
Scribe mortar lines with dull x-acto blade
Brace walls with styrene strips
Use city classics corner bracing
A.P.E. PAINTING

ALWAYS PAINT EVERYTHING!

Black interiors
Flat primer
Brick colors + alternatives
Use "muted" colors when possible
Use a wash for brick mortar
Dullcoat
Window glazing last!
Vertical wash of thinned black acrylic paint
Dullcoat inside for frosted Windows - outside still reflects light
Black view block inside buildings
Paint interior walls black

Paint exterior wall color

Try to use muted, flat colors. Avoid bright colors. Avoids light showing thru walls
Use colored pencils to color bricks in lighter and darker shades of the brick.

Use a light gray / off white wash for brick mortar. Also, chalk, or spackle.
Viewblock

Black construction paper, cut to fit diagonally. Cut 1/2 way thru to form an X.
Signs

Computer, Photocopier and Decal Paper

Glosscoat walls before decals - Make your own!
Dullcoat walls before dry-transfers
Seal once dry and before assembly
Finished Walls
When adding window glass use Gallery Glass or Canopy glue - dries clear!

CA can cause hazing on the windows.
Streak the BACK of the windows vertically with thinned acrylic paint

Use paper or paint for shades in windows
Use a gluing jig or square
Other sign options - Ghost signs, City Classics, & your computer
Roof:

- Pick your roof treatment:
  - Black paint
  - Glue on a piece of fine grit sandpaper, paint black, gray, etc.
  - Tissue paper rolled roofing
  - Commercial roofing materials
- Use balsa or styrene strip to hold roof at chosen height
Roof details

Access doors  Air conditioners  Water tanks
Vents        Piping          Roof hatches
Chimneys     Skylights
So you didn't get a great joint?

Use squadron putty. 
Pipes or downspouts over the offending joint. 
Vines 
Decals
Weathering

Alcohol & India ink
Chalks
AIM/Bragdon weathering powders
Colored pencils
Alcohol & India ink over dullcoat
Signs, awnings, and scratch built wood loading docks, all add to the uniqueness of your structures.

Interiors and lighting