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With the recent debate between Bill Nye "The Science Guy" and Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis attracting as many as three million viewers, it is likely that interest in creationism/evolution debates will skyrocket. Writing in *The Scientist* (February 7, 2014), NCSE's Ann Reid and Glenn Branch [warn](#) [4] that "formal oral debates between scientists and creationists are by and large counterproductive — at least if the goal is to improve the public's understanding of evolution and the nature of science, and to increase the level of support for the teaching of evolution uncompromised by religious dogma."

In Nye's case, Reid and Branch acknowledge that the debate was not disastrous: "Debates are performances, and Nye is a splendid performer." They conclude by applauding "scientists who are concerned about the precarious state of evolution education in the United States and want to confront creationism," but urge, "participating in formal oral debates with creationists is far from the best — and certainly not the only — way to do so. By all means, confront creationism, but do so in ways that advance, rather than hinder, the goal of a scientifically literate public that supports the teaching of evolution."

The Nye/Ham debate on "is creation a viable model of origins in today's modern scientific world?" took place on February 4, 2014. Live-streamed to perhaps as many as three million viewers worldwide, the event also received wide media coverage, including from [Religion News Service](#) [5] (January 30, 2014),

[CBS News](#) [6] (February 4, 2014), [MSNBC](#) [7] (February 4, 2014), the [Associated Press](#) [8] (February 4, 2014), [NBC News](#) [9] (February 5, 2014), and [Live Science](#) [10] (February 5, 2014), with comments from NCSE's staff frequently featured. The debate is currently [viewable](#) [11] at Answers in Genesis's YouTube channel.

Before the debate, NCSE's Josh Rosenau expressed optimism about the outcome — and provided Ken Ham [bingo cards](#) [12] (PDF) for its viewers — in a [post](#) [13] on NCSE's Science League of America blog (February 4, 2014). In a subsequent post (February 5, 2014), Rosenau assigned the victory to Nye, [writing](#) [14], "How did Nye manage to do so well? A lifetime of experience and a passionate love of science surely played important parts, but I like to think this group helped a lot, too," and including a photograph of Nye at NCSE's office, where he spent a day being prepared for the debate by NCSE's staff.

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[4] <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/39118/title/Opinion--Confronting-Creationism/>

[5] http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/ham-on-nye-debate-pits-atheists-creationists/2014/01/30/140d58ee-89ec-11e3-a760-a86415d0944d_story.html

[6] <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bill-nye-defends-evolution-in-kentucky-debate/>

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[9] <http://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/bill-nye-wins-over-science-crowd-evolution-debate-n22836>

[10] <http://www.livescience.com/43127-nye-creationism-debate-response.html>

[11] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6kgvhG3AKI>

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