Subject: Re: Single Quotes, Double Quotes Posted by offenbrg on Mon, 18 May 1998 07:00:00 GMT

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Charles Cavanaugh <cavanaug@nicole.eos.ucar.edu> writes:

```
> ------F486C25E1BA64765FD765959
```

- > Content-Type: text/plain; charset=us-ascii
- > Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
- > Can anyone please explain to me why the line
- > asciiutc = "1993-09-19T06:30:00.000000Z"
- > fails compilation with the error message
- > asciiutc = "1993-09-19T06:30:00.000000Z" > ^
- > % Syntax error.
- > but the same line, using single quotes instead of double
- > quotes, compiles.

The problem has to do with the way IDL creates octal (base-8) numbers. To indicate that a number is octal, it is preceded by a double quote. The problem arises when the leading character of your string is a numeral.

In your example, the "1 indicates an octal expression, which it processes as a number (the 9s are confusing it a little); then it subtracts 09, a decimal number, subtracts 19, and then comes to a T, which makes no sense at all in an arithmetic expression, so it stops.

In short, the ' and the " are not interchangble WHEN the first character of your string constant is a numeral.

## Examples:

```
;
;Octal expression --- leading "
;
;IDL> help,"123
<Expression> INT = 83
```

```
;String expression --- leading '
IDL> help, '123
<Expression> STRING = '123'
;Hexadecimal expression --- surrounded by " with trailing x.
IDL> help, '123'x
<Expression> INT
                          291
Hope all this helps!
Joel Offenberg
      "...And I am unanimous in this" - Mrs. Slocumbe
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```