
Subject: Re: Single Quotes, Double Quotes
Posted by [offenbrg](#) on Mon, 18 May 1998 07:00:00 GMT
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Charles Cavanaugh <cavanaugh@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

>   asciutc = "1993-09-19T06:30:00.000000Z"

> fails compilation with the error message

>   asciutc = "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 interchangeable 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

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"...And I am unanimous in this" - Mrs. Slocumbe

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