Subject: Re: Single Quotes, Double Quotes Posted by davidf on Thu, 14 May 1998 07:00:00 GMT

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Charles Cavanaugh (cavanaug@nicole.eos.ucar.edu) writes:

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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.
```

I don't know the "official" answer, but I suspect it has to do with the way octal and hexadecimal numbers are specified in IDL.

For example, to create a hexadecimal number:

Or, an octal number 12:

Thus, if the "thing" you are assigning to a variable is a number (but you want it as a string), you must use single quotes or it will be mistaken for a hexadecimal or octal number. For example, this fails:

% Syntax error.

But this works:

$$IDL > a = '5'$$

And this works, because the first thing after the double quote is a letter:

IDL> a = "A5"

Not sure this "explains" it. But perhaps it illuminates the problem enough to suggest a solution. :-)

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/