

---

Subject: Re: simple question about bytes

Posted by [Craig Markwardt](#) on Thu, 02 Sep 1999 07:00:00 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

rappold <rappold@zedat.fu-berlin.de> writes:

> I want to check if a line in an ascii file starts with a number or  
> character. My idea was to read the first character and convert it to  
> "byte" and check if its in or out the range of '48b' and '58b'. The code  
> example is :

```
>  
> ; check for header  
> header=""  
> readf, lun, header  
> firstchar=strmid(header,0,1)  
> first_byte=byte(firstchar)  
>  
> no_head=0  
> head_index=0  
> WHILE ((first_byte LT 48b) AND (first_byte GT 57b)) DO BEGIN  
>     readf, lun, header ; reads next line  
>     head_index=head_index+1 ; counts header lines  
>     no_header =head_index  
> ENDWHILE  
> ...  
>  
> it compiles fine but on runtime I get the error message :  
>  
> Expression must be a scalar in this context: <BYTE    Array(1)>
```

The byte() function converts a string to a byte array. In this case the byte array has a length of one.

Which gets me to my second point. For some reason, conditional expressions are not acceptable by IDL if they are 1-element arrays. The remedy is the following:

```
WHILE ((first_byte(0) LT 48b) AND (first_byte(0) GT 57b)) DO BEGIN
```

Which gets me to my third point. You don't seem to be recalculating first\_byte in the loop. You will probably end up reading the whole file before failing.

Good luck,

Craig

--  
-----

Craig B. Markwardt, Ph.D.      EMAIL: [craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu](mailto:craigmnet@cow.physics.wisc.edu)  
Astrophysics, IDL, Finance, Derivatives | Remove "net" for better response  
-----

---