

A confessional is essentially the answers that a castaway is giving to an offscreen producer. These are used to narrate the story as it unfolds, to learn about the contestants, to delineate strategies and to give opinions on other castaways. Usually, but not exclusively, the castaway is alone and you can see their name at the bottom left of the screen (chyron). Guidelines have been established to count these confessionals and that is the purpose of this document. These rules have been established along the years in many Survivor-centric internet forums, but probably the one that stands out is [Survivor Sucks](#). They are:

1. Anytime a castaway is looking directly at the camera and answering producer questions, it counts as a confessional.
  - a. The most evident is when the castaway is alone. I call this “confessional time/producer interview.”
    - i. The “confessional time” doesn’t end exclusively when the castaway finishes talking, but when the camera cuts to another scene.
  - b. Sometimes the castaway is surrounded by other tribemates, but as long as that person is looking directly at the camera and is narrating, it counts as a confessional. I call these “on the fly confessionals.” These are more prominent in earlier seasons. As an example, a similar Tasha confessional was counted during *Cagayan*, Episode 8 where she looks at the camera and talks to it. This is the link to [Survivor Sucks](#) for it.
    - i. On the fly confessionals are the most disputed among people who count. Some include them while others disregard them.
  - c. Also part of “on the fly” confessionals is when a cameraman is following a castaway and they are narrating/talking as they walk along.
    - i. Sometimes, the castaway will “think out loud” with the cameraman. When the castaway is saying reactionary comments like these (i.e., “Wow, look at that.” “That is amazing!” “Nothing here.”), they don’t count as part of a confessional. This is especially important when a castaway is looking for a Hidden Immunity Idol, as an example.
  - d. Reading a clue or Tree Mail does not count as part of a confessional. The exception is when the castaway is giving an interview and they take out the paper and read it to the camera.
2. Voice overs count as a confessional even if the person is not talking directly at the camera. The reason for this is that the voice over is most likely taken from an interview during “confessional time.”
3. Ten Second Rule: During a confessional, there will be time gaps that will show other scenes like people talking back at camp, as an example. As long as those gaps don’t have a duration of 10 seconds or more, it will count as one confessional for a castaway. Once the time gap has a duration of 10 seconds or more, it constitutes a brand new confessional. This is especially important when a castaway has consecutive confessionals.
  - a. Sometimes confessionals will be edited together to include combinations of voice overs, “confessional time” and “on the fly” confessionals with gaps in between.

Sometimes you will see different interview locations as part of a single confessional. The important thing is to keep following the 10 second rule in these instances.

- b. The 10 second counter starts either after the castaway has finished talking or after there's a cut to another scene when they are shown talking directly to the camera, whatever comes last.
  - i. For example, you can have a castaway in "confessional time" who has stopped talking for a couple of seconds but they still remain with the camera fixed on them so that is still part of the confessional, even though the castaway is not talking. In this example, once the camera cuts to another scene, then the counter starts.
- c. When there is a commercial break, this 10 second time is reset.
  - i. That means, that the 10 second time remains in place as there are changes in Days, unless there's a commercial break in between.
4. Any confessional given during the "*Previously on Survivor*" segment, does not count.
  - a. The only exception to this is during the Premiere as Jeff is introducing the season.
  - b. Confessionals during the Finale in the "*PoS*" segment also don't count, even when they are new. These are usually given by castaways after Jeff names each of them still left in the game.
5. For counting purposes, once the castaways start Tribal Council, confessionals aren't included. This is because the person voted out is no longer in the game, even when it is a Jury member, and the episode usually ends afterwards.
  - a. The only exception is when it is an episode that has more than one Tribal Council at different dates (double boot episode). This means that after the first Tribal Council is done and the castaways are back at camp, confessional counting is resumed.
  - b. Voting confessionals during Tribal Council are not included.
  - c. Final Words confessionals are not included.
  - d. The other exception to this rule is during seasons that have Redemption Island or Edge of Extinction in play. See guideline #8.
6. The Jury Speaks confessionals, Rites of Passage confessionals (from castaways voted out) and Loved Ones confessionals are not counted.
7. The name of the castaway does not have to appear on the screen (chyron) every time for a confessional to count.
8. Redemption Island/Edge of Extinction: When a castaway is sent to RI/EoE, every confessional is counted until they are eliminated in a duel (RI) or have officially been removed from the game as in EoE. This is because they are still active in the game. That means, any confessional after Tribal Council from that person should count. Precedent for this was established over at [Survivor Sucks](#) with Candice in Episode 4 of *Blood vs. Water* by having had a confessional counted while being in Redemption Island and while the credits were rolling.

9. Dual Confessionals: These occur when two castaways looks directly at the camera at the same time and narrate.
  - a. Both castaways should receive a count of one each as long as the confessional continues to occur, including any back and forth between them.
  - b. Except for Blood vs. Water themed seasons, these dual confessionals are rare.
    - i. Day 0 in Blood vs. Water themed seasons essentially has couples being introduced in dual confessionals.
  - c. Precedent for this was established over at [Survivor Sucks](#) during Episode 1 of *Nicaragua* where a dual confessional was counted for Alina and Kelly B. Also, all dual confessionals were counted for Season 6 in the official counts.

**Note:** Depending who you ask, you will get different guidelines for counting confessionals. Do voice overs count? Some will say definitely while others will disregard them. Does a confessional need to have a chyron exclusively? Some people will only count those, while others will include voice overs as well. My point is that confessional counting is very subjective. What I've done is study confessional counting throughout all seasons of Survivor and taken into account all the guidelines throughout the years. You may disagree with my numbers, but you will find consistency throughout, that's for sure. Hope my guidelines help in some way and happy counting!

**Note:** For the ten second rule, I use a chronometer plus a video player that measures milliseconds.

**Note:** Confessionals are, for the most part, heavily edited. That is, even though a castaway may have actually said something on a confessional, it could be edited for a specific purpose, as in telling a story which the producers may want to convey to the audience. Music cues, special sound effects may also be added just for this sole purpose, as well as cutting and pasting different confessionals (even from different dates and/or locations) just to arrive at the intended finished product. The takeaway is, while reading my transcripts, please take this into consideration as a lot of content is left on the cutting room floor.