

Mission Briefing

On Tatooine, the Empire has outlawed the mouse because it slows down data input. Every action runs through the keyboard now — reach for that little plastic device and the Stormtroopers will be on you before you can say *"these aren't the droids you're looking for."*

Fortunately, R2-D2 has 60 droid friends stationed across the desert grid below, and with the right keyboard moves you can find, fix, and command any one of them without ever touching the forbidden device. In this mission you'll master five keyboard skills every confident Excel user relies on:

- Pointing to nearby cells with the **arrow keys** instead of clicking them.
- **F2** to change what the arrow keys do while you're editing a formula.
- **Delete** to erase the character to the *right* of the cursor.
- **Backspace** to erase the character to the *left* of the cursor.
- **Insert** to switch between inserting text and typing directly over it (Overtyping mode).

Complete all five missions below, then take on the **"Kessel Run — No-Mouse Mission in Under 12 Parsecs"** challenge where you enter in a single formula that puts every skill to work back-to-back. Mouse in the drawer, Agent. Let's begin.

Set Up the Droid Grid

We'll list all 60 of R2-D2's droid friends in cells A1:F10, one droid per cell, named for exactly where they stand — row and column. Every cell tells you exactly which droid lives there, so you can always tell whether your keyboard moves landed on the right one.

1. Open a new, blank Excel workbook.
2. Press **Ctrl G** to open *Go To*. Type **A1:F10** and press **Enter**. This selects the whole grid without touching the mouse.
3. Type this formula (don't press Enter yet): **= "R"&ROW()&"C"&COLUMN()**
4. Press **Ctrl Enter** (not just Enter). This fills every selected cell with its own version of the formula at once — 60 droids reporting for duty.
5. Press **Ctrl Home** to jump back to cell A1.

✓ **Checkpoint** — Every cell from A1 to F10 should now show its own droid name — for example, cell E7 shows R7C5. Keep this grid visible; every mission below points somewhere inside it.

Mission 1 — Point and Shoot

Skill: Use the arrow keys to point to a cell instead of typing its address.

When you type `=` to start a formula, Excel doesn't make you type a cell's address — you can simply arrow over to it and Excel writes the reference for you. This is the single biggest mouse-saver in all of Excel.

6. Press **Ctrl G**, type **H2**, press **Enter**.
7. Type: `=`
8. Press **←** six times.
9. Press **Ctrl Enter**.

✓ **Checkpoint** — Cell H2 should now read R2C2 — you just built `=B2` and found that droid without typing a single letter or number of its address.

Mission 2 — The F2 Toggle

Skill: Change what the arrow keys do while you're mid-formula.

While you're editing a formula, watch the status bar at the bottom-left of the Excel window — it names exactly which mode you're in. Press **F2** and you're in **Edit** mode: arrow keys move your typing cursor within the formula text, and **Home** / **End** jump it straight to the very beginning or end at light speed. Press **F2** again and you're in **Enter** mode. From there, the moment you press an arrow key, the status bar switches you into **Point** mode, where arrow keys now select a cell and insert its reference instead of moving your cursor.

10. Press **Ctrl G**, type **H4**, **Enter**. Type `=C9` and press **Ctrl Enter**.
11. Press **F2**. The status bar says *Edit*.
12. Press **←** twice. The blinking cursor moves inside the formula text itself — it's not selecting cells, it's editing text.
13. Press **End**. The cursor jumps straight to the end of the formula. Press **Home**. It jumps straight to the very beginning, just before the `=`.
14. Press **F2**. The status bar now says *Enter*.
15. Press **↑** once. The status bar switches to *Point*, and Excel reaches for a nearby cell instead of moving your text cursor. Press **Escape** to back out without changing anything — you'll put this move to real use in the Kessel Run challenge.

✓ **Checkpoint** — H4 still reads R9C3, untouched. What matters here is the sequence you watched in the status bar: *Edit* → **F2** → *Enter* → (arrow key) → *Point*.

Mission 3 — Delete Right

Skill: Use **Delete** to remove the character to the right of the cursor.

16. Press **Ctrl G**, type **H6**, **Enter**. Type **=B99** and press **Ctrl Enter**.

✓ **Checkpoint** — H6 shows 0 — that stray extra 9 sent the formula off the grid to empty cell B99. No droid lives out there. Time to reel it back in.

17. Reselect H6 and press **F2**. The cursor lands at the very end of **=B99**.

18. Press **←** once, landing between the two 9's.

19. Press **Delete**. The extra 9 to the right of the cursor disappears.

20. Press **Ctrl Enter**.

✓ **Checkpoint** — H6 now reads R9C2 — droid found. Delete cleaned up the character sitting to the right of the cursor; the cursor itself never moved.

Mission 4 — Backspace Left

Skill: Use **Backspace** to remove the character to the left of the cursor.

21. Press **Ctrl G**, type **H8**, **Enter**. Type **=DD2** and press **Ctrl Enter**.

✓ **Checkpoint** — H8 shows 0 again — DD2 is a real (and very distant) cell, just not the one we wanted.

22. Reselect H8 and press **F2**. The cursor lands at the end of **=DD2**.

23. Press **←** once, landing right after the second D.

24. Press **Backspace**. The D to the left of the cursor disappears.

25. Press **Ctrl Enter**.

✓ **Checkpoint** — H8 now reads R2C4. Compare this to Mission 3: same broken-looking cursor position, opposite key, opposite side deleted.

Mission 5 — Insert vs. Overtyping

Skill: Use **Insert** to toggle between inserting text and typing directly over it.

Normally, anything you type is *inserted* at the cursor and pushes existing characters to the right. Press **Insert** once and Excel switches to **Overtyping** mode instead: what you type replaces the character to the right rather than shoving it aside. Watch the cursor — it often changes from a thin line to a solid block when Overtyping is active.

26. Press **Ctrl G**, type **H10**, **Enter**. Type **=F7** and press **Ctrl Enter**.

27. Reselect H10 and press **F2**. The cursor lands at the end of **=F7**.

28. Press **←** once, landing right between the F and the 7.

29. Press **Insert** to turn Overtyping ON.
30. Type: **5**
31. Press **Insert** again to turn Overtyping back OFF — good habit, so it doesn't surprise you later.
32. Press **Ctrl Enter**.

✓ **Checkpoint** — H10 now reads R5C6. Overtyping replaced the 7 with a 5 in place. Had Overtyping been off, typing 5 there would have inserted it and left you with R57 instead.

The Kessel Run — No-Mouse Mission in Under 12 Parsecs

One formula, five keyboard skills, back-to-back. Start to finish, the mouse stays in the drawer.

33. Press **Ctrl G**, type **J4**, **Enter**. Type **=A10** and press **Ctrl Enter**. (J4 should read R10C1.)

Leg 1 — Delete: A10 → A9

34. If needed, reselect **J4**, press **F2**, then **←** twice — the cursor sits right after the A, before the 1.
35. Press **Delete** twice — the first removes the 1, the second removes the 0 — then type **9**, then press **Ctrl Enter**. (J4 should now read R9C1.)

Leg 2 — Backspace: A9 → C9

36. If needed, reselect **J4**, press **F2**, then **←** once — the cursor sits right after the A.
37. Press **Backspace** to remove the A, type **C** in its place, then press **Ctrl Enter**. (J4 should now read R9C3.)

Leg 3 — Insert: C9 → C5

38. If needed, reselect **J4**, press **F2**, then **←** once — the cursor sits between the C and the 9.
39. Press **Insert** (Overtyping ON), type **5**, press **Insert** again (Overtyping OFF), then press **Ctrl Enter**. (J4 should now read R5C3.)

Leg 4 — Point: append the grid's far corner

40. If needed, reselect **J4**, and press **F2**. The cursor is already at the end of the formula — perfect, since we're about to add to it.
41. Type: **&" -> "&** — as soon as you type that final **&**, check the status bar. If you are in Edit mode press **F2** because you want to switch to *Point* mode.
42. Press **←** four times, then **Ctrl ↓** once — pointing to the grid's bottom-right corner.
43. Press **Ctrl Enter**.

✓ **Checkpoint** — If J4 now reads R5C3 -> R10C6, your mission is complete — you built and repaired that formula from a standing start using only Delete, Backspace, Insert, F2, and the arrow keys. The Empire never saw your hand leave the keyboard and touch the performance draining mouse.

Agent's Cheat Sheet

Keep this page open while you work. The moment one of these becomes automatic, the mouse starts collecting dust.

Key	What it does while you're editing a formula
← → ↑ ↓	In Point mode: selects a cell and inserts its reference. In Edit mode: moves your typing cursor within the formula. Check the status bar, bottom-left, to see which one is active.
F2	From Edit mode, switches you to Enter mode. From Enter mode, the next arrow key you press switches you to Point mode. F2 also opens editing on a cell that isn't already being edited.
Home / End	In Edit mode, jumps the cursor straight to the very beginning or end of the formula at light speed.
Delete	Removes the character immediately to the RIGHT of the cursor.
Backspace	Removes the character immediately to the LEFT of the cursor.
Insert	Toggles Overtyping mode. While it's on, the characters you type replace what's to the right instead of pushing it over.
Escape	Cancels the current edit — restoring the cell's original formula.
Enter	Commits the formula and moves down one cell.
Ctrl Enter	Commits the formula but keeps the cursor in the same cell. If multiple cells were selected, Ctrl Enter fills each selected cell with the same formula at once, each adjusted for its own position; this is how we built the whole droid grid in one move.
Ctrl G	Opens Go To — jump straight to any cell or group of cells by typing their address. The fastest mouse-free way to get around a big workbook.