

Special Topic II

therefore, thus, hence, for that
reason, as a result...

These words all express some kind of logical inference or causation

- (1) The computer fell on the floor, and as a result, the hard drive doesn't work.
- (2) The computer was left near the edge of the table, and for this reason, when I bumped the table, it fell.
- (3) The computer is broken, and therefore I need a new one.
- (4) The computer is broken, and I need a file in it to finish my paper. Thus I cannot finish my paper until it is fixed.
- (5) This is a computer. It is broken. Hence, it is a broken computer.

Explanation

1. *as a result* (also *consequently*, *as a consequence*) expresses a direct cause-effect relationship. But it is not necessarily unavoidable.
2. *for this/that reason* indicates that the preceding sentence or clause describes the reason, but not the cause, for the stated result. The causal connection is not direct, and the result is not unavoidable.
3. *therefore* is similar to *for this/that reason*, but the connection is more direct and to some extent unavoidable. Usually *therefore* is more natural expressing a causal relation than a logical relation.
4. *thus* is similar to *therefore*, but it usually expresses a somewhat stronger meaning of unavoidability. Also, it is usually more natural to express logical connections. It also contains a nuance of *in this way*.
5. *hence* expresses the strongest meaning of unavoidability, and it is most natural in expressing logical relations.

But Note This

However, note that the meanings of these words overlap a great deal, and there are many cases in which several (or even all) can be exchanged without changing the meaning of the sentence significantly.

For details, read Chapter 123 in 『科学論文の英語用法百科』（京大出版、2004年）