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Focusing on examples (with lots of pictures!), I will show that a checkerboard surface  $F$  decomposes under plumbing (Murasugi sum) only if “obviously” so, in the sense that  $F$  has a de-plumbing cap which intersects the complementary checkerboard surface in a single arc. This fact will enable the straightforward computation of a new “plumbwise” notion of essentiality for any spanning surface which can be realized as a checkerboard. (Received July 21, 2017)