**Considering the impact of humour in *Men Should Weep***

In 1947, when the play was first performed, the *Scotsman* newspaper observed:

‘The audience felt at times that they were eavesdropping, so natural were the comings and goings and the see-sawing between comedy and tragedy.’

Throughout the play, Ena Lamont Stewart uses humour to leaven the tragedy of the Morrison family’s situation. Act 2, Scene 1 is a good example of the way the mood in the play shifts between comedy and tragedy because it opens with the humorous interplay between the characters as they wait for Granny’s ‘flittin’ and ends with John’s climactic speech about being born into poverty.

Make notes on how effective the use of humour is in the opening section of the scene (pp. 41–50 until Maggie arrives home).

Consider the following points and make reference to such features as characterisation, dialogue, tone, innuendo and stage directions:

* the interplay between Mrs Bone, Mrs Harris and Granny
* Granny’s maudlin mood
* Mrs Harris and Mrs Bone’s attitude towards Lizzie
* Jenny and Isa’s impudence towards the older women
* the removal men’s canny humour and their behaviour towards Jenny and Isa.