$$\overset{+7}{MnO_4^-} \rightarrow \overset{+2}{Mn^{2+}}$$

4. Balance hydrogen using H^+

$$8\ H^+ + MnO_4^- \rightarrow Mn^{2+} + 4H_2O$$

5. Balance charge using e^-

$$5\ e^- + 8\ H^+ + MnO_4^- \rightarrow Mn^{2+} + 4H_2O$$

This is a balanced half-reaction

electrons are a reactant

MnO_4^- is gaining electrons

MnO_4^- is being reduced

Where do the e^- come from?